

THE CHALLENGES OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT  
BY THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH IN THE CAYMAN ISLANDS  
WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO  
THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

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To my wife, Sonia, who has encouraged and supported me in this project. To my daughter Sheree for her encouragement to finish this study. May the Lord bless you both and give you an open heaven and a bright future.

As a church called to witness God's love, the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) affirms the importance of civic engagement and participation by people of faith. It is imperative that the church's voice and influence be heard and felt amongst political and economic decision-making entities to advocate policies, which advance justice, peace, and equality.

—Talbert W. Swan, *Called to Civic Engagement*

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## ABSTRACT

Filled with great anticipation, I traveled to Paradise and was determined to find information about the challenges of political engagement by the Pentecostal church in the Cayman Islands with special attention to the Church of God of Prophecy. Examining the setting and demographics of this society, with peoples from 135 nations of the world, it was confirmed that natural and spiritual glossolalia existed in “the land of soft fresh breezes” and needed interpreters to help with spiritual and natural engagement. Literary critics were solicited to get their collective historical perspective on political engagement. I consulted the Bible given to me by the Author and Finisher for theological precedents on political engagement and found many in both the Old and New Testaments.

Jesus’ commission to make disciples of all nations is an act of engagement. The quest was to identify, inform, and confront the challenges of political engagement, hence, twenty experienced participants were consulted. Information from these seasoned informants confirmed the Pentecostal church in the Cayman Islands inclusive of the Church of God of Prophecy struggles with political engagement internally and externally but are willing to change.

Pentecostals endorsed more education to help fix the hindrances to political engagement, seeking to foster greater collaboration between government, churches, and other groups in the Cayman community. There is hope for Paradise! Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord! Hallelujah!

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

### **Introduction**

Christianity is the prominent religion in many places; the Caribbean islands included. In the *Atlas of Global Christianity*, it is stated that “in the 17th century when the European colonizers came to establish plantations in the Caribbean, they brought their respective Christian denominational traditions with them and Christianity has been integrally connected with the region's colonial past.”<sup>1</sup> Laborers were needed to work on the plantations, so male and female Africans were brought in as slaves. They were not allowed to bring their gods, but they came with their own culture and religion. The racial and ethnic diversity of people, along with their superior and inferior positions, stood out as one of the distinctive characteristics of Caribbean Christianity.

In every society, the role of the church is significant. God created this world for the glory of his name and the fulfillment of his purpose. Life on earth has been tragically affected by the fall of humanity into sin, as recorded in the book of Genesis, and has resulted in numerous problems.

In this universe, all created entities were believed to have been indissolubly united and mutually interdependent. Accordingly, the life of the community was a continuation of the life of the ancestors, and the life of the individual was inextricably bound up with that of the community. The wellbeing of both the community and the individual, therefore, was contingent upon a holistic interaction on their part with the cosmos as a unit.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth Ross, eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 178.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson and Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity*, 178.

Throughout history people have been on a quest for the ideal life. All over the world there are people living their lives under the power and authority of different forms of government that are seeking to ascertain and establish what is essential for the well-being of people. Also, there are numerous religions; people are on a search for God in different ways.

The Christian perspective is that God the creator intervened in human history by sending Jesus into the world for the redemption of all who would believe in him. Many people have come to recognize that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself . . . and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”<sup>3</sup>

Followers of Jesus Christ embrace Christianity, which is a prominent, “monotheistic religion” that is based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Around the world there is a multiplicity of religions; believers in Jesus Christ, who, despite variations in how their belief is expressed, belong to the Christian community and have the responsibility to witness boldly through their lips and lives to God’s love. “God’s people are called to engagement in the created world. The Bible teaches us various ways in which engagement by believers in the secular public square, is entirely consistent with God’s calling and God’s mission for his people.”<sup>4</sup>

The Bible endorses the public ministry of the church. One of many clear and direct Old Testament injunctions is recorded in Jeremiah 29:7, where the exiles were

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<sup>3</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:19-20. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God’s People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 229.

instructed to “seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”<sup>5</sup> This can be regarded as encouragement to promote a theology of peace. Eldin Villafane refers to this as the “Jeremiah Paradigm” for the city, which is “an overarching holistic vision for the city, one that can inspire our work in urban and intercultural ministry.”<sup>6</sup> Although the people of God were in exile, they were instructed to seek the welfare of the city along with their personal well-being.

The mandate that Jesus gave to the church is called the Great Commission, which cannot be done without engagement of his followers with the world. The instruction to his followers is to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”<sup>7</sup> Not everyone is aware of or has accepted the gospel about Jesus the Prince of Peace on whose shoulder the government of God is placed (Isa 9:6). Speaking about the church that understands the mandate given, Steve Siogren and Rob Lewin opined that “we have been called to reach out radically to a lost and dying world that is without hope apart from Jesus Christ.”<sup>8</sup> No place is off limits to the followers of Jesus unless the Holy Spirit forbids.

In the Caribbean, there is not a direct statement of “separation of church and state.” However, there is the popular view that the main focus of the church is on things

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<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah 29:7, New International Version.

<sup>6</sup> Eldin Villafane, “A Vision for the City: The Jeremiah Paradigm for the City,” *Enrichment Journal* (Spring 2008): 24, accessed July 20, 2017, [http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200802/200802\\_092\\_VisionCity.cfm](http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200802/200802_092_VisionCity.cfm).

<sup>7</sup> Matthew: 28:18-20, New International Version.

<sup>8</sup> Steve Siogren and Rob Lewin, *Community of Kindness: A Refreshing New Approach to Planting and Growing a Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003), 18.

of the Spirit, sharing about spiritual renewal, spiritual growth, and spiritual goals, which all seem intangible and are done in preparation for the afterlife. Probably that is why in some parts of the world, the church is sometimes ignored and not seen as being necessary for nation building. Life in society would be less challenging if we recognize that

Christian witness in the public square contributes transcendent values about moral and ethical issues. Christian withdrawal opens a moral vacuum susceptible to influences that pressure government to move outside the purview designated by God. Politics affects government, shapes society and influences culture. Because of what the Bible teaches and the inevitability of its effect on our culture, Christians must care about politics.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Cayman Islands**

The Cayman Islands, comprised of Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac, and Little Cayman, are British overseas territories located in the western Caribbean.<sup>10</sup> The motto of the Cayman Islands is “He hath founded it upon the seas,” which is a direct quote from Ps 24:2a, adopted to show the divine providence of God, the Creator, and his protection and blessings on the three small pieces of real estate, totaling one hundred square miles. These islands were discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1503, then became British following the Treaty of Madrid in 1670.<sup>11</sup> “During the period 1661–1671 the first settlers came from Jamaica; to live in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.”<sup>12</sup> Even though the

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<sup>9</sup> David Closson, “Four Reasons Christians Should Care about Politics,” The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, accessed May 16, 2017, <http://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/4-reasons-christians-should-care-about-politics>. Politics is “the art or science of government; the art or science concerned with guiding or influencing governmental policy, and the art or science concerned with winning and holding control over a government . . . It is the total complex of relations between people living in society, relations or conduct in a particular area of experience especially as seen or dealt with from a political point of view” (“Politics,” accessed May 16, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/politics.>).

<sup>10</sup> “Cayman Islands,” accessed June 12, 2017, [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Cayman\\_Islands](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Cayman_Islands).

<sup>11</sup> “About the Cayman Islands,” accessed June 12, 2017, <https://www.turtle.ky/about-us/about-cayman-islands/>.

<sup>12</sup> P. Ann van B. Stafford, “Historic Cayman,” accessed July 20, 2017, <https://caymannature.wordpress.com/cultural/historic-cayman/>.

country has democratically elected officials, the governor represents the government of England and the queen as head of state. Cayman and Jamaica were both under British rule since the British secured sovereignty from Spain. In 1959, when Jamaica began the discussion about independence, the Cayman Islands, which were attached to Jamaica for eighty-nine years (1873–1962), choose to remain as a dependent territory of the United Kingdom. Today, the colonial umbilical ties with the United Kingdom are still intact, and so the British remain the ultimate lawgivers for the Cayman Islands.

The Cayman Islands have more registered businesses than people. In mid 2011 the Cayman Islands had an estimated population of about 56,000, representing a mix of more than 100 nationalities. Out of that number about a half are of Caymanian descent. About 60% of the population is of mixed race (mostly mixed African-Caucasian). The islands are almost exclusively Christian, with large numbers of Baptists, Presbyterians and Catholics, but also hosts Jewish, Muslim and Hindu communities. The vast majority of the population resides on Grand Cayman, followed by Cayman Brac and little Cayman, respectively. The population is projected to rise to 60,000 by 2020. The capital of the Cayman Islands is George Town, on the southwest coast of Grand Cayman.<sup>13</sup>

Presently, Cayman has an estimated population of about fifty-eight thousand people; among them are holders of work permits who number twenty-four thousand from 135 different nations of the world.<sup>14</sup> It is considered one of the great melting pot societies of the world with its gain from offshore banking and tourism. With the increase in the number of different nationalities, there are new religions and new kinds of spiritualties, with new types of churches springing up everywhere. Christianity came to the Cayman Islands in 1846, soon after the abolition of slavery in 1834. Since the 1800s to the present, the numbers of Christian denominations in the Cayman Islands have multiplied significantly.

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<sup>13</sup> “Cayman Islands,” accessed May 13, 2017,  
<http://www.eupedia.com/forum/archive/index.php/t-32827.html>.

<sup>14</sup> *Cayman Compass*, December 2016, accessed May 16, 2017.

The Cayman Islands have a democracy under the monarchy, and all functioning democracy requires the participation of citizens, and groups working together to ensure that the community succeeds. With growth and development in the Cayman Islands, there came the need for those in governance, along with various groups, to interact and work together for economic, social, and political well-being.

In large as well as small societies such as Cayman, it is essential for there to be interaction and collaborative effort between government, church groups, and organizations present in the society. That can be viewed as political engagement, which should ultimately promote quality life for all citizens, residents, and visitors. Political engagement is critical for the Cayman Islands, but there will undoubtedly be many challenges. The goal of this thesis-project is to identify, inform, and confront the challenges of political engagement facing the Church of God of Prophecy, a Pentecostal denomination, in the Cayman Islands.

### **The Public Ministry of the Church**

Challenges are created because not all churches embrace the idea of political engagement. Primarily, the church in its evangelistic outreach seeks to share about the availability of “eternal life,” “quality life,” in the here and now and beyond. It targets matters of faith and many other issues, but to fulfill its mission, the church in every place cannot afford to focus only on those inside and remain isolated from the society within which it is located. The real mission field is on the outside. The church’s declaration of the gospel through evangelistic outreach and social programs can be regarded as a form of outward political engagement. The church does not stand alone; it has its unique role

that no other organization in society can fulfill: it is described by Jesus as “salt” and “light” (Matthew 5:14-16).

Historical records show that in 1846 the Presbyterians installed their first pastor in George Town, Grand Cayman. Michael Craton noted, “Rev. James Emslie, the Presbyterian minister, was accused by some of preaching ‘hellfire sermons,’ but he was uncompromising.”<sup>15</sup> That church is still functioning today as Emslie United Church. The Christian church has as its goal the changing of the world. Engagement with society that is based on the Word of God is a fundamental of the Christian faith and is geared at bringing about transformation in people’s lives, all for the good of humanity. Villafane quotes Orlando Costas, who said, “as the community of believers from all time and places, the church both embodies the Kingdom in its life and witnesses to its presence and future in its mission.”<sup>16</sup> Some scholars have posited different ways that the church can be viewed, even as totally separated from the state or even as a “deeply political body, called to a particular kind of deeply political activity in the world.”<sup>17</sup> Churches in the Cayman Islands need to focus on the biblical mandate which, when properly examined, will reveal that there must be political engagement.

Christianity being the dominant religion in the Cayman Islands comprises various denominations with different doctrinal belief systems. These can be further grouped as established churches and others, which is inclusive of the Pentecostals. Established churches in the Caribbean are Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Roman Catholic. In

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<sup>15</sup> Michael Craton, *Founded upon the Seas: A History of the Cayman Islands and Their People* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003), 229.

<sup>16</sup> Eldin Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflection on Urban Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 25.

<sup>17</sup> Kristopher Norris and Sam Speers, *Kingdom Politics: In Search of a New Political Imagination for Today’s Church* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 7.

Cayman, these established churches are the Presbyterians, Anglicans, Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), Seventh Day Adventists, Baptists, Church of God Full Gospel, Church of God (Universal), and Roman Catholics.

The other groups inclusive of the Pentecostal churches are New Testament Church of God, Church of God of Prophecy, First Church of the Open Bible, Power of Faith Deliverance Ministries, All Nation United Pentecostal (Oneness), Assemblies of God, Seven Day Church of God (Pentecostal), and Universal Church of the Kingdom of God. Many more new ones have emerged in the last few years, in some cases comprised of individuals from similar ethnic groups.

### **Culture and Engagement**

The challenges in Cayman are greatly increased by varying cultures and different types of religious and denominational groups. With national growth and development there must be changes in government policies, red tape, hurdles, and other prerequisites needed to ensure *shalom*. Most of the Christians living in the Cayman Islands are concerned about problems facing society and desire to play a role aimed at transformation of hearts and ultimately of society. They are not seeking political reform; they do not want to be disengaged or non-participatory or to be in contention with politicians. As the church plans various activities and seeks to let its voice be heard on issues, it is the dawning of a new day where the church understands its role and wants to be a part of the solution.

The Cayman Islands have a very high standard of living with the fifth highest per capita income of countries of the world. There is no direct taxation on income or

purchases made in the Cayman Islands. These islands that “time had forgotten” have been blessed to be one of the tax-free havens and a premier financial center of the world, with one of the most forward-thinking and frugal monetary authorities regulating the financial climate of the nation. The Cayman dollar is pegged to the United States currency and is higher in value than most other currencies. Craton says, “The political, administrative, and legal systems of the islands evolved in response to changing circumstances and growing prosperity.”<sup>18</sup>

This may seem to be an affluent society, but there are many marginalized, poor individuals whose lives are greatly affected by alcohol, illegal drugs, and other social ills. I endorse Villafane’s statement that “as long as social concern and love for the poor, oppressed, and needy are optional, an appendix to the gospel, nothing much will happen in evangelical churches.”<sup>19</sup> Also, instances exist with inconsistencies in the nation’s life, with lack of prosperity for the minority; the poor suffer from injustice. God is greatly concerned about those who need help. Jesus declared, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”<sup>20</sup> Paul D. Hanson suggests that Jesus’ portrayal in the Gospels points to “a gospel of critical engagement with the Romans and Jewish leaders, the uncompromising insistence on the sole Lordship of the heavenly Father.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Craton, *Founded upon the Seas*, 305.

<sup>19</sup> Eldin Villafane, *The Liberating Spirit: Toward an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 218.

<sup>20</sup> Luke 4:16-19, New International Version.

<sup>21</sup> Paul D. Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010), Kindle ed., loc. 481 of 3224.

## The Pentecostal Church

Pentecostalism is a movement; it is a trend within Christianity of a growing group that shares characteristic beliefs and goals.<sup>22</sup> Pentecostals are people of the Spirit whose belief and experience are based on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2. Influenced by the Holy Spirit, believers spoke in tongues and prayed and worshiped with vibrancy; and jubilation. This branch of Christianity emphasizes the work and person of the Holy Spirit and the direct experience of the presence of God by the believer. The early Pentecostals were usually poor, simple folks, empowered by the Holy Spirit; even today much work and wonders are being done by Pentecostal churches all over the world. There are reports of exponential growth.

Pentecostal churches, with their loud, vibrant worship, accompanied with hand clapping, foot stomping, and dancing in the Spirit, would undoubtedly run into problems with the government, other churches, and Caymanians. Not many Caymanian natives were readily drawn to this new, noisy way of worship. In Grand Cayman, a mission team from Church of God of Prophecy in the Bahamas conducted a three-week revival, sharing the gospel and trying to help sensitize the indigenous and immigrant populations to the Pentecostal form of worship. There were many struggles, but the Pentecostal flame kept on burning.

The Pentecostal movement in the Cayman Islands is new to the territory when compared with the Presbyterians (1840s), Baptists (1865), Seventh Day Adventists (1895), and Church of God, Anderson, Indiana (1905). The established churches that arrived a century before the Pentecostal church seem to have made an indelible mark on

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<sup>22</sup> “Defining Pentecostalism: What Is a Pentecostal?”, Talking Pentecostalism, accessed May 27, 2017, <http://talkingpentecostalism.blogspot.com/2006/10/what-is-pentecostalism.html>.

the indigenous population, which includes some politicians. People seem to be quite pleased with the worship style and the short length of worship sessions. (These are some of the displeasing issues expressed about the Pentecostal tradition.) Garnett Roper stated, “It is quite noticeable that while the Pentecostal churches struggle to engage politically, the proponents of the ‘official religion’” (legacy of the colonial masters), which Roper also called established churches, “seem to have the ear of the politically elected officials.”<sup>23</sup>

The first appearance of what was considered Pentecostal worship was in 1862 in the Presbyterian Church in Bodden Town district, Grand Cayman. Craton noted that a revivalist group from Honduras worshipped with loud, fervent singing, hand clapping, and foot stomping. This was short-lived and eventually outlawed by the pastor, Rev. William Whitecross. This faded away shortly afterward.<sup>24</sup> Approximately one hundred years passed.

Bill George in *Until All Have Heard* said,

A Pentecostal presence was introduced on the Caymans in 1967. Bishop Herro Blair, a minister of the ‘Church of God’ (Cleveland TN), which, in the Caribbean is known as New Testament Church of God, arrived from Jamaica and contacted a few believers who for employment purposes, had migrated to Cayman. The movement gathered momentum from new adherents to the Christian faith, those Pentecostal migrants who were already there working, along with an influx of new Pentecostals job seekers from Jamaica. Within a few months, a church was established. The first church was established in the capital George Town; the second church was established in the West Bay in 1973 and a third in East End in 1974.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Garnett Roper, *Caribbean Theology as Public Theology* (Kingston, Jamaica: Xpress Litho, 2012), 147-48.

<sup>24</sup> Craton, *Founded upon the Seas*, 229-30.

<sup>25</sup> Bill George, *Until All Have Heard: The Centennial History of Church of God World Missions* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2010), 96-97.

## **Church of God of Prophecy**

A look at history reveals that on June 13, 1903, Ambrose Jessop Tomlinson (1865–1943) on Burger Mountain (in Cherokee County, North Carolina) founded the Church of God. In its first two decades, the church grew numerically and spread to more than twenty states and several countries. There were serious internal leadership struggles that ultimately divided that movement into two main factions in 1923. Then the courts ultimately called one group, Church of God (Cleveland), and the other, Church of God of Prophecy.

The Church of God of Prophecy began in Jamaica in 1923 and came to Grand Cayman in 1978, when the Caribbean overseer contacted someone desiring to have a branch of the church on the island, since members of the church were also among the migrants in Cayman. Property with a small building was purchased, and a Jamaican national with “Caymanian status” (legal papers) was appointed as interim pastor. Later, a Bahamian was appointed as national overseer of the church.

The founding father of the two largest Pentecostal churches on the islands, A. J. Tomlinson, did not encourage participation in politics. It was considered negative and unspiritual. During that time, the perspective of the leader was considered as important as doctrine. As he grew spiritually, he stated,

My interest in politics vanished so rapidly that I was almost surprised at myself when campaign year came around and found nothing in me craving the excitement of conventions, rallies and public speaking. I was so taken up with Jesus, so bent on electing Him, that one day as I was walking along the road a gentleman met me and shouted out just like I usually done, “Hurrah for M\_\_\_\_\_!” With hardly a thought and no premeditation and yet with real enthusiasm I shouted back at him, “Hurrah for Jesus!” He was so startled and amazed that as he rode on and looked back at me he looked as if he wondered if I had just escaped from the lunatic asylum. But he said no more, and went on.

My friends and neighbors begged me to at least go to the polls and vote, but I said, “No, I will only vote for Jesus.” Their kindness, their friendship, their entreaties, and reasoning had no more effect on me than if I had been in another world. I was dead to the world and the world was dead to me. I never have taken any part in politics since, nor gone to the polls and cast a ballot. When I was sanctified my whole nature was changed and my whole being was almost constantly going out after God. I was almost incessantly seeking for the full baptism with the Holy Ghost.<sup>26</sup>

It is not surprising that ministry of the Church of God of Prophecy in the Cayman Islands did not make much effort for engagement with those in governance, or other groups in the community. Even now the question is, where are the leaders in the current international church leadership who are seeking to create the platform to address political issues? Most of the leaders keep their views private, refraining from speaking as the servants of God on current issues especially as they relate to justice and truth. For many of our leaders and members, political engagement is not a familiar term. Some think partisan politics is very divisive, and so the middle ground of neutrality is taken. Education on the broad concept of political engagement is necessary.

The Church of God of Prophecy is quite open to cooperate with other organizations like Gordon-Conwell and Pentecostal theological seminaries. Such collaboration has presented opportunities for educating many of the ministers and leaders about social justice. The future is promising as we continue our studies.

Sharing the gospel is usually accompanied by numerous challenges when trying to promote the Pentecostal way of worship. Many do not subscribe to women being joint custodian of the gospel with the men. The Pentecostal churches teach that gender barriers do not exist, because the Spirit of God has been poured out equally on male and female.

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<sup>26</sup> A. J. Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict* Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2011), 153.

Acts 2 is referred to as the fulfillment of the prophecy made by Joel, and the move of the Spirit has become a global phenomenon. All these Spirit-filled people in the Pentecostal churches in Cayman are excited in their fellowship even though many natives view the Pentecostal movement negatively.

The government in the Cayman Islands operates according to the constitution, which gives power over how things are done in the nation, for the common good of all the people on the islands. The constitution allows for freedom of religion. Both church and government have different roles, yet, because both are working for the good of the people, their roles will overlap. Political engagement requires sharing of information, involvement in government's policy making, practical suggestions in discussions, and united effort between church and government. It is unknown how much link has been made in the past between the established churches and the government; yet these churches are first on the list of protocol to state functions.

It is not surprising that the concern of the Pentecostals in the Caribbean and the Cayman Islands in particular was to preach the gospel to those who would come to church and get them saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, and ready for heaven. The emphasis was on winning souls for the kingdom of God. In Cayman, most of the adherents were from other Caribbean nations, predominantly Jamaica, and were employed as construction workers, government employees, domestic helpers, hotel workers, and in banking and insurance. Just seeking to share the gospel and to increase church membership was difficult in a culture that was so permissive. Many who even made confession of faith in Jesus were not considered qualified for membership in some of the Pentecostal churches; Church of God of Prophecy included. With the churches'

strict membership requirements, many who attempted to join did not qualify. This additional screening of prospective members was a big challenge for leaders of the Church of God of Prophecy in the Cayman Islands.

Up to the 1980s, the Pentecostals in Cayman were not ready even to give thought to political engagement; they had their own barriers. A look at the doctrine of the Church of God of Prophecy, then, revealed the idea that the church is exclusively the body of Christ, and there was expectation of an inflow of God's people from other denominations. Exclusivism grew out of a self-understanding that Church of God of Prophecy was a fulfillment of the prophecy in Joel 2:23-28 and Acts 2, and that it was the very church that Jesus established; along with other misleading ideas, this idea made it difficult to fellowship with any other church groups. The position of exclusivism changed about 1994 when General Overseer Billy Murray in his address to the international assembly implored the church to turn to the harvest, with "Christ the message and the church the messenger."<sup>27</sup> With the emphasis of the new leader and the fact that more ministers were becoming scholars, concern and awareness were gradually being created for political engagement.

In Cayman during the early years, there was no united effort by the various Pentecostal believers, neither the churches that were present nor the new ones that came to the island. They had struggles of their own and did not seem to know how to cross

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<sup>27</sup> Adrian Varlack, *Foundations: Church of God of Prophecy: Concise History, Polity, Doctrine and Future* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House and Press, 2010), 79.

cultural barriers. It is true that “the expatriate Christian is challenged in his Christianity much more when he lives in a culture that is foreign to him.”<sup>28</sup>

Some of the challenges for political engagement experienced by the church also resulted from the organizational structure of the church body. Before proceeding with certain decisions, the local pastor in Cayman had to wait on permission from the overseer, who resided in another jurisdiction. Over the years, there have been changes in pastoral assignments, but the migrant ministers from Bahamas and Jamaica were not seminary trained and consequently were unprepared to deal with mission in a new culture. It was thought that the people of Cayman did not like the “high energy” Pentecostal church. To this end, ministry concentration was more to the migrant Caribbean diaspora living in Cayman.

### **The Challenges of Political Engagement**

The Cayman community, like many others, is getting more pluralistic due to an influx of immigrants who have come with their various cultures. Political engagement becomes more challenging with so many different nationalities and cultures living in the islands. Ecumenism and interfaith groups sometimes threaten the distinctiveness of Pentecostalism.<sup>29</sup> It is hoped that by identifying the nature of prevailing challenges and seeking to solve them together, further increase will take place in the Pentecostal churches in Cayman.

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<sup>28</sup> Richard Westra, “Pastoring an Expatriate Congregation,” Regional Synod of Canada, Reformed Church in America, February 1982, accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.reformed-church.com/Pioneer/feb-82g.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> National Council of Churches U.S.A., (The Ecumenical Challenge), accessed May 23, 2017, <http://www.nationalcouncilofchurches.us/shared-ministry/interfaith/IFRecumenical.pdf>.

Like any other nation there are set laws in Cayman, and immigrant workers are not included in the electoral process. If a job becomes available the chosen applicant must apply to the immigration department, and expatriate workers will be granted work permits for varying periods of time. Most expatriate pastors and members of the Pentecostal churches, Church of God of Prophecy included, may be saying the right thing but are still viewed as outsiders claiming to desire *shalom* for Cayman. In the opinions of some Pentecostals, the division of church and state should be maintained. Certain matters should be left to government; they are not willing to cooperate with church, and hence it is a struggle for church to go without united consensus.

Political engagement, especially with governmental authority and advocacy for the poor and marginalized, was quite minimal from the contemporary leaders of the Church of God of Prophecy. Several of the other Pentecostal churches in Cayman have their base in Jamaica; hence the whole advocacy for those who are on the fringes of society is not as strong as it should be. The voice of some churches is still not heard. Unfortunately, some choose to be negative or judgmental of the other people living on the island.

As a participant in the period of little or no engagement by Church of God of Prophecy in the Cayman Islands, I can deduce that some of the many challenges experienced by the church were due not just to the perspective of the founder or the doctrine of the church. Lack of knowledge of the outstanding biblical examples, the courage to be interactive, and training to develop appropriate skills of collaboration and conflict resolution contributed to our isolation. Lack of knowledge creates more challenges. Pentecostal will worship with fervency but do not seem to realize that God

wants obedience in all areas of life. The biblical pattern is, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.”<sup>30</sup> Politics is a method God uses to fulfil his purpose in the earth. People would do well to be informed and involved in positive ways.

Many of the congregants and most of the Pentecostal churches in the Cayman Islands were led by expatriate pastors who needed to apply for work permits. Consequently, they refrained from addressing public or societal issues, fearing the nonrenewal or cancellation of their work permits. For years this has been one of the main challenges of the Pentecostal churches. Some Pentecostal ministers were granted work permits that stated, “two years, non-renewable, non-negotiable, non-transferable.” The expectation was that although the Pentecostal congregation was growing, a Caymanian should be sought to fill the position and the pastor should leave the island for at least six months. Caymanian pastors were in some of the established churches, but not many were in the Pentecostal churches. There is a marked difference between the treatment shown to the expatriate pastors serving in the established churches and the expatriate Pentecostal pastors. Although both are on work permits, non-Pentecostals are able to view their calling differently. In a conversation with a retired pastor from the one of the established churches, he indicated that his mandate was from God, and he felt free to speak on any social issues.

If the church is registered with the Registrar of Companies as a not-for-profit organization, the work permit is free to the church, provided that the pastoral position is

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<sup>30</sup> Romans 13:1-2.

advertised in the nation's newspaper. All responses to the advertisement must be submitted to the immigration department and reasons given concerning the non-acceptance of applicants. Some Pentecostal pastors and members are often in the same category.

Due to differences in the type of organization, there is fear in addressing issues of national importance. Even those who are citizens sometimes refrain from expressing their opinion on issues. Some natives will often remind those who are granted citizenship that theirs (the natives') citizenship came by "pain," while others came by "paper or plane." Civic responsibility can be reinforced. Instead of insisting that foreigners remain quiet, they should listen to those who are praying for the peace of the city.

One wonders if the political leaders have exercised their authority properly, when fairness for all does not exist. For example, children born to a certain class of workers in Cayman cannot stay with them, and so are sent to relatives or guardians in the workers' home country, while others can keep their children on the island. Is there justice being shown to people? This action affects many in the Pentecostal churches, including the Church of God of Prophecy. Inasmuch as the church should affirm governmental authority in positive ways, it cannot be silent when families are being torn apart. The moral standard of the society is the church's duty, not only the government's; therefore, failure on the part of Christians to point out to law enforcers incidents of immorality, wrongdoing, and injustice is an abandonment of responsibility. While this was being done, others remained silent. Failure to speak out on the issues makes the church

complicit with wrongdoing. Dr. Martin Luther King says, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”<sup>31</sup>

In 2003, approximately four thousand residents were granted Caymanian status (citizenship). This change in immigration status from work permit holder to citizenship has strengthened the resolve of some Pentecostal church leaders and members in the Cayman Islands. They can now cast their votes in national elections and be more engaged in evangelical and social outreach, one hopes with greater effectiveness. “The growth of Pentecostal movement into a highly visible and at times dominant expression of Christianity has intensified these encounters in everyday life and in institutional and theological contexts.”<sup>32</sup>

Nationalism is very strong in the Cayman Islands. It is always being said that jobs are for Caymanians. Advertisements often require Caymanians to apply first, or a suitable person residing in the islands.<sup>33</sup> Pentecostalism in the Cayman Islands would have been challenged because, based on the global trend, rejection is ever increasing against any entity, secular or religious, which wants to impose and dominate a country or people. While there are some natives who remain in the Church of God of Prophecy, some others will be quick to leave if they are displeased with a change of leadership or other decisions made to which they do not agree.

Over the years an effort was made to help the needy in the community in Cayman where the church was located. Challenges came about because there was no interaction or

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<sup>31</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., “Brainy Quote”, accessed April 11, 2017, <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/martinluth122559.html>.

<sup>32</sup> Ninth GloPent Conference, “Pentecostalism and Its Encounters with Other Religions,” GloPent (European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism), accessed May 25, 2017, <https://www.glopent.net/Members/webmaster/uppsala-2016/uppsala-2016-call>.

<sup>33</sup> “Work Permit Numbers Stabilize at about 24,000,” *Cayman Compass*, December 7, 2016, accessed April 11, 2017, <https://www.caymancompass.com/2016/12/07/work-permit-numbers-stabilize-at-24000-non-caymanians/>.

collaboration between church and government. Some of the people in need try to have their needs met through government's Needs Assessment Unit and seek help from the church and other groups. Lack of communication caused duplication. Cases were found where the church was assisting the same people without knowing that they were already being helped. The church is now alerted to the need to partner with others in the community to avoid supporting drug habits and giving funds to some who are drug pushers. The preferred way is for each stakeholder to view the other as partner instead of seeming to be in adversarial roles. In a small nation, it does not work well when everybody has their own agenda and no meeting is held to discuss issues.

Church members have citizenship both in heaven and on earth. They act out of love for God and can truly effect change only by being involved in the political process of the nation. Help given to locals in need was help given out of love. "Love equals recognition of human rights, equality, respect and perception of common needs"<sup>34</sup> as the right action to be taken; it was not considered as a route for political engagement with the people. Pentecostals depend on the Holy Spirit but also need to be taught the Word of God, along with how to reach a settlement, and skills to help diverse group work together and deal with any other conflicts that may arise.

The ideal is to have a government that is politically engaged with all other positive, functioning groups or organizations within the society, including the church. Some citizens within and without the church are not aware of the fact that there should be political engagement. They seem unaware of the need for collaboration between church, nation, and other groups; hence, they classify some expressions and statements from the

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<sup>34</sup> Stephen Charles Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 41.

church as judgmental or interference in the government's business. Citizens and residents in Cayman need to be taught about political engagement. It is not about inciting individuals to run for political office, although, that may be a consideration; it is about participation in national activities. There will be challenges in pursuing engagement, so there is the need for people in government and in church to be taught skills. Without knowledge, they will not participate when there are issues of national importance. Neither will they be able to show that they understand the values of political engagement and methods of engagement.

Leaders at different levels within the church need to be prepared to guide other ministers and laity in interaction and collaboration with those in governance, along with the leaders of other clubs and organizations. Ministers and members must be taught about basic challenges and how to confront them. As stated by Ken Gnanakan,

One of the most pressing needs for an organization to function effectively is for you to understand the basic challenges and issues you confront in working amid prevailing and challenging tendencies. Those engaged in community development do not merely deal with people in the community; there are numerous related factors. Your leaders and teams will need to have a deep understanding of the complex intertwining issues in your context.<sup>35</sup>

The Pentecostal church has made significant strides in the Cayman Islands, but many of the indigenous population are related to each other and require others to "leave matters of the country alone." Criticism must not be made because you do not belong. For example, one must not comment on injustice, because they are accustomed to the church being unengaged. If the people in society and in government learn to accept the

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<sup>35</sup> Ken Gnanakan, *Managing Your Organization* (Bangalore, India: Theological Book Trust, 2011), 41.

suggestions of the church, including the Pentecostal church; we will see a new day dawn when the various groups are working together for the common good of all.

For example, two contemporary ills in Cayman are the putting of young people in jail for misdemeanor offences, and the banks readily foreclosing on many homes of natives, while the government boasts of millions in surplus. Without engagement, many other social ills such as crime and violence, racism, lack of social justice, and failure to help those on the fringes of society will arise with serious implication if they go unchecked. Politicians and some service clubs claim that they want what is good for the people, and that is also the desire of the church; but lack of communication on the part of those working for the good of the people in the nation will lead to misunderstanding and conflict, especially since individuals are from so many different parts of the world.

Some challenges also are connected to the physical location where meetings are held; the location of the church determines some of the people who will attend. Some of the Pentecostal church properties have limited parking spaces. Worship in the Pentecostal church is unpredictable; while the established churches, worship is still highly formal and predictable, which is the choice of many natives.

## **Conclusion**

Challenges for political engagement are everywhere. The portions of Scripture that outline engagement between the people of God and the community need to be taught, so believers will become more alerted to what God desires. It is hoped that political engagement between government, service clubs, and all churches would assist with problems associated with race relations and tension between nationalities. “The climate

among Pentecostal intellectuals is changing. They are awakening to the question of race; discovering the enormous political and social potential of their own past; and beginning to enter the scholarly dialogue and the political debate on many issues.”<sup>36</sup> Political engagement becomes more challenging with so many different nationalities and cultures living in the islands. Ecumenism and interfaith groups sometimes threaten the distinctiveness of Pentecostalism. Challenges are based on differences such as nationality, accent, and color of skin. Members of Church of God of Prophecy are mostly Afro-Caribbean. Many challenges are subtle and deep-seated in race relations and nationalities. It is hoped that by identifying the nature of prevailing challenges and seeking to solve them together, further progress will take place in the nation and the Pentecostal churches in Cayman.

Church of God of Prophecy in the Cayman Islands has come a far way regarding political engagement; but much more is needed, and the researcher will seek to gain more information from the Word of God; other scholars; participants who attend the Church of God of Prophecy, some who have served as pastors of the church; other ministers; and political representatives. With government, church, and other groups engaging each other for the common good of the community; significant challenges will be overcome with collaboration.

In seeking to gather information about the challenges of political engagement by the Pentecostal church in the Cayman Islands with special attention the Church of God of Prophecy, the researcher will send questionnaires to all participants and conduct semi-structured interviews with each one, which will be recorded. Most of the questions on the questionnaire will seek to obtain participants’ preferences or degree of agreement with a

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<sup>36</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 197.

statement or set of statements. The Likert scale, which require respondent/participants to indicate their level of agreement with a given response, will be utilized.

There will be twenty-one participants in this project. There are seven pastors, six males and one female, who represent different Pentecostal denominations in the Cayman Islands. Four are former pastors from the Church of God of Prophecy and one is a current one. In this group are four males and one female.

The next group will comprise five current ministers of the Church of God of Prophecy. The final group of participants comprises a retired Anglican priest; the presiding pastor for the Conference of Seventh Day Adventist churches; president of the University College of the Cayman Islands and former political representative; and a former government consultant.

Many of these participants are familiar with the Cayman Islands society and will be able to answer the questionnaire and make the time for the semi-structured interview. Their experiences and various areas of services in the Cayman Islands make them ideal to be participants in this project. Nineteen of the selected individuals reside in the Cayman Islands, while two reside in Jamaica. I have their mailing addresses and their telephone numbers; and I have been assured that whenever I am ready, they will make the necessary time to complete the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Historical Perspective**

Not much is written on the challenges of political engagement by the Pentecostal churches in the Cayman Islands with special attention to the Church of God of Prophecy; so, this literature review will use relevant authors, books, and other sources of information that address this problem elsewhere. Information gleaned will then be contextualized to the Cayman setting.

Christians have historically taken the position on political engagement, which generally reflects their denominational leaning or position. They sometimes maintain the teachings or tenets of their organization as laid out by the founders of that religious group. It is interesting that after many years or centuries, some groups refuse to revisit the doctrinal position taken by their forebears even though contexts and people have changed. This fixed position sometimes goes against the teachings of the Bible and is difficult to collaborate and engage with others in the society where the group exists.

Amy E. Black in the book *Five Views on the Church and Politics* states that “Christians throughout the centuries have asked questions about how to interact with governing authorities and the broader culture. Followers of Christ owe ultimate allegiance to God, yet they also have rights and responsibilities as earthly citizens.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. Brian Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, ed. Amy E. Black (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 7.

Lewin Williams in *Caribbean Theology* observed that “the believer who has discovered God’s will for his or her life, cannot any longer be a detached observer of history, but must seek to discover what God is up to in the world and join God.”<sup>2</sup> Because the coming of Christ is the greatest event of all times, his Spirit-filled servants have to cooperate with him in saving those who are lost.

In *City of Man*, the authors, Michael Gerson and Peter Wehner, state that “God has never been detached from the affairs of this world; on the contrary, he has played an intimate role in its unfolding drama from the creation to the incarnational presence of Jesus. God, the Bible teaches, is the author of history, and is not indifferent to the realm of politics and history.”<sup>3</sup> Nothing takes God by surprise; he knows our context and will give guidance and direction as we engage with others to fulfill our duties. Gerson and Wehner, having looked at the duties of religious people who are engaged in politics in different times and in different societies, said, “Certain priorities and responsibilities will commend themselves to Christian living in constitutional monarchies, in totalitarian dictatorships, and in a representative democracy. Christianity can impact public life in a variety of settings.”<sup>4</sup> Hence the need to remain relevant in changing societies, and it is even more critical for the Pentecostal church living in communities and more so in a small society like the Cayman Islands.

Many Pentecostal churches are concerned only with the saving of the soul, while ignoring political engagement as a part of the full gospel. Williams commented on the

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<sup>2</sup> Lewin Lascelles Williams, *Caribbean Theology* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), xi.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Gerson and Peter Wehner, *City of Man: Religion and Politics in the New Era* (Chicago IL: Moody Publishers, 2010), 24.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Gerson and Peter Wehner, *City of Man*, 21-22.

“saving of the soul, while the unjust conditions in which victims live are ignored.”<sup>5</sup> He further said “this approach to the gospel is individualistic and private, neglecting the needs of the community, and the circumstances that keep the community in bondage; and the church’s mission in the Caribbean fails to make a connection between evangelization and humanization.”<sup>6</sup> Hanson agrees that “Christians are commissioned to be ambassadors of the New Creation through which God seeks to restore the entire cosmos to wholeness (2 Corinthians 5:16–21 and Romans 8:18–39).”<sup>7</sup>

### **The Caribbean Perspective on Political Engagement**

Williams posits that “the central issue that confronts the church in this region has to do with its understanding of its mission. How may the church understand its missions? How may the church in the Caribbean understand its mission?”<sup>8</sup> He further shows why some Caribbean churches are having challenge to engage, not making a difference and becoming irrelevance, when he said:

It is by preserving and maintaining its identity and becoming relevant in relation to its context. For some churches, the first tendency is to attempt to protect and preserve their own distinctiveness. This often means the journey inward, to protect and preserve faith. Many churches seem to find their identity focused around their internal experience as congregations in worship and fellowship. The church’s fear of losing its faith makes it protective and defensive. This fear threatens the freedom of faith and makes Caribbean Christians afraid to venture into the world witnessing to the gospel.<sup>9</sup>

As was mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis-project, the Pentecostal churches in the Cayman Islands, the Church of God of Prophecy included, are fearful of

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<sup>5</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, x.

<sup>6</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, x.

<sup>7</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, Kindle loc. 487.

<sup>8</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, ix.

<sup>9</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, ix.

addressing societal issues because that might jeopardize the renewal of their work permits. I concur with Williams: “This fear also makes the church withdraw from the world in the hope of preserving its identity. A consequence of this withdrawal is that the church becomes preoccupied with itself and thereby becomes irrelevant in its context. This is sometimes seen in a local church’s preoccupation with survival.”<sup>10</sup>

The Pentecostal movement in the Cayman Islands must come to grips with the significant mandate given by the Lord to be salt and light in a chaotic world. Although being just over fifty years old as a movement in this context, and making practical and spiritual impact in the nation, there are still many challenges with political engagement. Collaboration between churches, state, and all other civic groups is a must in this small society. To overcome the challenges in the society, Hyacinth Boothe said,

[the] church should seek to initiate and participate in discussions and programs; let the united voice of the church be heard. It is necessary that political engagement be a part of the ministry of the church in the Caribbean because the region is reaping the harvest of its historical-cultural experience expressed in social and economic chaos, political confusion, technological deficiency, impoverishment of natural resources, the increasing polarization between the rich and the poor. Denominations must resist parochialism and come together at every level of national life to pool resources and to devise strategies which would lead to legitimate social and Christian action that will encourage the national implementation of programs aimed at redressing our imbalances in the society.<sup>11</sup>

The steps outlined by Boothe will not be achieved by wishful thinking but require that Pentecostal churches to be informed and be more engaging. Christian withdrawal from the public square is a dereliction of duty, which opens up a moral vacuum, which further endangers engagement and collaboration in the community. Williams agrees with Boothe by stating that “this journey inward fails to come to grips with issues of economic

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<sup>10</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, x.

<sup>11</sup> Hyacinth Boothe, “Women—Ministerial Formation and Ministry: A Caribbean Perspective,” *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* 17, no. 1 (April 1996): 21.

justice and inequality in Caribbean society. The journey inward often leads the church into a compromise with the status quo's attempt to keep the poor in their place, and thereby ignores the struggle for meaning in the world.”<sup>12</sup>

### **The Migrant Church**

The Pentecostal churches in the Cayman Islands, including the Church of God of Prophecy, are considered migrant churches. Harold Hunter and Neil Ormerod referred to research which shows that in spite of the success of many migrant churches, they have failed to integrate the indigenous population in the membership of the church and still appeal to migrants.<sup>13</sup> This is the case with the Pentecostal churches in the Cayman Islands. Base on the researcher’s observation, between 75 and 90 percent of the membership of the Pentecostal churches are non-indigenous people. (This will be verified based on the one of the questions on the questionnaire.) This could also be one of the reasons for the lack of interest in political engagement of the Pentecostal churches in the Cayman Islands.

Government and the church seek to enhance the lives of the people in the community; that is, the political and the religious working together. Isabel Phiri, Kenneth Ross, and James Cox suggest that “political and religious values come together in a particular view of what human beings are, or should be,” meaning that “the call to do good” lies at the heart of Christianity and politics.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the collaboration of the

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<sup>12</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, x.

<sup>13</sup> Harold D. Hunter and Neil Ormerod, *The Many Faces of Global Pentecostalism* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2013), 178.

<sup>14</sup> Isabel Phiri, Kenneth Ross, and James Cox, *The Role of Christianity in Development, Peace, and Reconstruction* (Nairobi, Kenya: Kolbe Press, 1996), 12.

Pentecostal church with others in the nation where it is located should not be dependent on one's migrant status but on one's mission as given by the Lord.

Even though the Pentecostal churches are involved in the broader society with education and their social programs, Roy Bodden, a native Caymanian, former politician, and author, observed that "Caymanians and expatriates have grappled and continue to grapple with the concrete issues of . . . history, prejudice, and coexistence."<sup>15</sup> It is indeed a challenge to engage in the Cayman community, where there are people from more than 135 nations on work permits. The Pentecostal church should be a part of the solution by helping to bring people together, and not allow each ethnic group to carve out their own corner.

While great spiritual strides by Pentecostal churches are appreciated in the Cayman Islands, there is great consternation for the unconcern shown toward political issues in the country. John Adetoyese spoke of "the historical relationship between Christianity and politics as the frequent source of disagreement and complexity."<sup>16</sup> This study seeks to find out the reasons that bring about challenges of political engagement by the Pentecostal church in the Cayman Islands with specific attention to the Church of God of Prophecy. Joe Aldred in *Thinking Outside the Box on Race, Faith and Life*, says the church needs to be informed of

the politics that seeks the welfare of people, builds up community and works for the good of all. Christians should be at the forefront of that kind of politics. We who are called to be the salt of the earth that is, its seasoning, its preservative, should not be afraid to help bring justice, peace and redemption to our

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<sup>15</sup> Roy J. A. Bodden, *The Cayman Islands in Transition: The Politics, History, and Sociology of a Changing Society* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publisher, 2007), xiii.

<sup>16</sup> John Olu Adetoyese, "The Challenges of Christians' Participation in Politics," accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.biblicaltheology.com/Research/AdetoyeseJO02.pdf>.

communities. As light of the world we should bring illumination, clarity and focus on what is good for the benefit of all.<sup>17</sup>

Historically, the Pentecostal churches and specifically the Church of God of Prophecy in my context, have preached the “other world gospel” but have remained silent on societal issues. In this postmodern world, most of our constituents “expect that the church speaks out against wrong doings, and engages its political leaders in a conversation of the importance of moral and ethical values in making a society stronger.”<sup>18</sup> Robert Linthicum opined that “God is the creator of the city/community and is present in it”; Christians has authority to speak on issues, “for God loves and admires the city, seeing it as the jewel of his creation.”<sup>19</sup>

In my context, it is quite noticeable that while the Pentecostal churches struggle to engage politically, the proponents of the official religion (the legacy of the colonial masters), which Garnett Roper also called established churches, seem to have the ear of politically elected officials.<sup>20</sup> Those seeking the peace of the city will agree with Linthicum that “God is invested the city in us, and expects us to be responsible for its stewardship and development.”<sup>21</sup>

Politically appointed leaders should represent all their constituents, as Christians represent God in their nation. Eldin Villafane suggests, “We will falter in our spirituality and thus grieve the Spirit if our struggle with evil, does not correspond to the geography

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<sup>17</sup> Joe Aldred, *Thinking Outside the Box on Race, Faith, and Life* (London: Hansib Publications, 2013), 143.

<sup>18</sup> Hector Ortiz, Global Pentecostal/Leadership, 3<sup>rd</sup> Residency January 10-14, 2017, Unpublished class presentation, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, January 12, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Robert C. Linthicum. *City of God, City of Satan: A Biblical Theology of the Urban Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 80.

<sup>20</sup> Garnett Roper, *Caribbean Theology as Public Theology* (Kingston, Jamaixa: Xpress Litho, 2012), 147-48.

<sup>21</sup> Linthicum, *City of God, City of Satan*, 80.

of evil.”<sup>22</sup> Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. captured this same sentiment when he wrote from the Birmingham, Alabama, jail, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”<sup>23</sup> To this end, Williams declares that “as the Caribbean church begins to perceive its mission as the breaking of the chains that bind the poor and oppress the weak and deliver them from inner apathy and indifference, this church begins to learn that in Jesus Christ evangelization and humanization are joined.”<sup>24</sup>

Viewing the church as the conscience of the society, I concur with Hanson, who said that “human governments are legitimate only to the extent that they serve the purposes of even-handed justice, provision for the needs of the poor and infirm, and global peace. It is solely from the promotion of these purposes that human institutions derive their authority to rule.”<sup>25</sup> In an affluent society like Cayman, the cry of the poor and marginalize must be magnified by the Pentecostal church. Williams further stated that “for the church to ask for a changed person and not changed circumstance in which the person lives, is for the church to refuse to ask for a changed life. Also, to ask for changed circumstance without a changed person is an exercise in futility.”<sup>26</sup>

The Pentecostal church in the Cayman Islands, whose members are the ones primarily affected by the inequities concerning their children not being able to stay with them, cannot be silent; instead, the church must heed the words of Villafane and Williams, who spoke about the “geography of evil” and the “breaking of the chains that

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<sup>22</sup> Eldin Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 22.

<sup>23</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” excerpted at *The Atlantic* website, accessed January 19, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/1963/08/martin-luther-kings-letter-from-birmingham-jail/274668/>. Originally published as “The Negro Is Your Brother,” *The Atlantic*, August 1963.

<sup>24</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, x.

<sup>25</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, Kindle loc. 605.

<sup>26</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, x.

bind the poor and oppressed,” respectively. The prophetic voices of Amos and Jeremiah need to be heard in every context where we live. Hanson spoke of the legacy of the political model that “sets forth the clear distinction between the ultimate authority of God and the limited, delegated authority of every human government. It defends the equality of every human under God’s rule and bitterly opposes anyone who violates the rights and the irreducible dignity of subjects, regardless of rank.”<sup>27</sup>

### **European History**

It was the Roman emperor Constantine who, in the fourth century, granted Christians freedom of worship, along with political privilege. Under his rule, Christian bishops functioned in an official political capacity, and the power of the state was used to enforce doctrine. In the course of a century or so, the position of Christians in Rome went from the church against the state to the church for the state.

“Pope Innocent the third, who lived in the 13th century, viewed himself not simply as a spiritual leader but as a temporal ruler; and he proved it by seizing authority away from secular government. During his reign, the papacy was at the height of its power; it was, in effect a theocratic superstate.”<sup>28</sup>

The history of the Christian church in Europe has been plagued with wars of religion and controversies and schisms among themselves; the world does not see the church as a good umpire to make the call on issues facing our communities. Gerson and Wehner argues that by

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<sup>27</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, Kindle ed., loc. 405.  
<sup>28</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 26.

examining the history of religious involvement in politics, many non-religious people throw up their hands in dismay. Everyone would be better off, they say, if religious people will just keep their views to themselves. There is a long history here. Following Europe's bloody wars of religion, Enlightenment thinkers in England and on the continent argued that the only safe option was the privatization of religion and its complete separation from the public realm. There are dangers, it seems, both in societies dominated by religion and societies where religion is banished.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Purpose of the Church**

The most important event that ever happened in human history is the coming of Christ; thus, the important and distinctive mission of the church is its calling by God to proclaim the good news of Jesus in all the world. The church is obligated to take the gospel (good news) to every nook and cranny of the world. Engagement and collaboration are natural outcome as we learn and pattern Jesus. Churches must take with utmost importance the simplicity of their task and engage in deeds of charity and justice while involving themselves in many other community activities. Stephen Mott proposes that “the church must be vigilant against special interests in our politics for wherever Christ is preached, we are not just dealing with human element but spiritual. Evil exists external to the individual not only in the order of society, but also in the social and political roles of powerful supernatural beings.”<sup>30</sup>

Gerson and Wehner observed that “sorting out the proper relationship between religion and politics is particularly difficult for Christians.”<sup>31</sup> They quote the social philosopher Jacques Ellul, who said “every time the church has gotten into the political

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<sup>29</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 17.

<sup>30</sup> Stephen Charles Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 6.

<sup>31</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 16.

game, it has been drawn into self-betrayal or apostasy.”<sup>32</sup> When this researcher talks about politics and engagement, he is not necessarily advocating partisan politics, which can be very divisive, but collaboration with others who are helping to shape the future of the community. Ellul further stated that “politics is the Church’s worst problem; it is her constant temptation, the occasion of her greatest disasters, the trap continually set for her by the Prince of this World.”<sup>33</sup>

Inasmuch as we should show respect to an individual’s or group’s opinion, this researcher is not in full agreement with Ellul. I share the thoughts of Gerson and Wehner that “the Bible teaches that God is the author of history and is not indifferent to the realm of politics and history. So, it would be foolish to exclude politics from the things over which God has given authority, especially since civil government was itself established by God.”<sup>34</sup>

### **Five Views on the Church and Politics**

Amy Black, general editor for *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, explores the Christian traditions and political engagement of the Anabaptists, the Lutherans, the black church, the Reformed, and the Roman Catholics. The Anabaptists, which now includes the Amish, Mennonites, and Plymouth Brethren movements, take the view that “Christian allegiance should be to the kingdom of God alone. If politics demands the deep involvement in this world, holiness involves separation from it.”<sup>35</sup> They further state that “for some Anabaptists, the duties of a Christian are restricted to praying for those in

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<sup>32</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 25.

<sup>33</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 25.

<sup>34</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 24.

<sup>35</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 26.

political authority, paying taxes, passively obeying the civilian government and focus more on the example of the church itself as an alternative society.”<sup>36</sup> When churches advocate separation from the world, how can that church fulfill to the commission of the Lord, who has sent us into the world to make disciples of all nations; for this is a form of engagement. Many churches in Cayman still advocate separation.

The [black] church seeks holistic justice as a community and serves as a unified voice for peace. This communal outlook calls attention to institutional wrongdoing and systemic sins, especially evidenced in racism, and seeks the transformation of social and political institutions. Corporate sins require structural changes, instituted through political means. Thus, a central part of the church’s mission is to be a voice for such communal reform.<sup>37</sup>

For this tradition, there is “the relentless pursuit of liberation, justice, and reconciliation.”<sup>38</sup> The black tradition has always struggled for equality and to be heard in the wider society. The Black church “emphasizes the positive role that government can play in serving justice, seeking the good of all people, and promoting reform and reconciliation. At the same time, the Black church is acutely aware that power can be a means of oppression, because her people have faced it firsthand.”<sup>39</sup> The Pentecostal church in Cayman has similar views to the Black church in politics and the rest of life.

The Lutheran vision indirectly connects the church to the public world. The church is tasked with nourishing and sustaining the callings of lay Christians as they move from the church into the world. “If the church is really the church, it will effect an internal ‘revolution of the heart’ among its laity that will indeed affect the world. The church will form the hearts and minds of laity, who will then enter all the complex

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<sup>36</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 26.

<sup>37</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 13.

<sup>38</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 13.

<sup>39</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 13.

interstices of the public world that are unreachable by the direct efforts of the church.”<sup>40</sup>

The Lutherans believe that the most effective public Christian witness will be done by laypeople who have been molded and prepared by the church and then are able to connect their Christian formation with the learning and activity of their secular callings.

Christian senators in legislatures have far more political impact than either church statements or advocacy centers. Christian professors in universities have more effect in shaping the “normal sciences of the day” than the resource materials cranked out by church and society bureaucracies. Christian doctors will have more voice in shaping a humane medicine than theological ethicists in seminaries. Christian laypersons, however, will also need help and encouragement in connecting their Christian convictions to their public lives. The church must spend far more time in playing another indirect role, that of a mediating institution. It must not only form the hearts and minds of its laity, but also help laity to connect the social teachings of the church with their public lives by providing contexts in which those connections can be self-consciously made.<sup>41</sup>

The Reformed thinkers emphasize that “God created the world very good, bestowing beauty and granting humans the ability and responsibility to fill the earth and multiply the good in it. However, humans bear the scars of the fall the wounds of depravity that affect every aspect of life, including politics.”<sup>42</sup> They further said,

Government is thus a good gift from God that, along with other fundamental societal institutions such as schools, churches, families, business, and labor, can be an agent of transformation. Because God instituted government, obedience to government is an expression of obedience to God. On the other hand, “to despise human government is to despise the providence which set that government in place.” Christians are called to engage the world in all its dimensions, to spread the transforming power of the gospel into each area of life, and to let the light of Christ shine more and more brightly in society at large.<sup>43</sup>

Roman Catholic political thought acknowledges “the essentially political nature

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<sup>40</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 74-75.

<sup>41</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 75.

<sup>42</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 13.

<sup>43</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 14.

of human life, while highlighting the responsibility of the state to cultivate the common good.”<sup>44</sup> This tradition upholds the “God-given nature of governmental institutions and views the state through the lens of human flourishing, which has both individual and communal dimensions. Thus, the church encourages citizens to participate in government as a means of furthering the common good of all people.”<sup>45</sup> At the other end of the spectrum are figures wanting the church to govern earthly affairs, so as to bring society better in the line with the understanding of God’s will.

### Christian Social Ethics

“The first task of Christian social ethics, writes Duke University’s Stanley Hauerwas, is not to make the world a better place or more just, but to help Christian people form their community consistent with their conviction and the story of Christ is the truthful account of our existence.”<sup>46</sup>

David Shosanya endorsed engagement of the church in society when he said, “For those of us called to live in and seek the peace of the city, separation from the world (system) and engagement with organic communities (people that God loves) are complementary spiritual practices/disciplines. One informs the other! Minimizing either one and overstating the other is a failure to recognize the interconnectedness of both!”<sup>47</sup>

Black seems to agree with Shosanya by saying that “Christians are called to engage the world in all its dimensions, to spread the transforming power of the gospel into each area of life, and to let the light of Christ shine more and more brightly in society

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<sup>44</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 16.

<sup>45</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 16.

<sup>46</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 26.

<sup>47</sup> David Shosanya, “Seek the Peace of the City, Jeremiah 29:7,” presentation, Caribbean Leadership Conference, Cayman Islands, January 26, 2017.

at large.”<sup>48</sup> Shosanya concludes, “We must not allow our lamenting about the state of our cities prevent us from engaging with the systems and strategic individuals within our cities. Lament and engagement are part of a continuous cycle of intercessory prayer in response to what we see and being connected with and speaking to the people about an alternative possibility of living surrendered to God!”<sup>49</sup>

### Arousing Need for Awareness in the Caribbean

Boothe makes an appeal to Caribbean women in ministry which is also relevant to male ministers; she states that “knowledge of contemporary cultural, political, and socio-economic realities of Caribbean existence is essential in the formation of ministers who are to minister to the needs of Caribbean peoples.”<sup>50</sup> Williams reminds us that “in the Caribbean a great number of the expressions of faith result in an accommodation to culture.”<sup>51</sup> He further said, “The Christ witnessed to in the church is often the ‘Christ of culture’ rather than the ‘Christ who transforms culture.’ A great deal of the preaching presents Christ who comforts the comfortable rather than a Christ who disturbs the complacent.”<sup>52</sup>

The enforcement of cultural practices became a great challenge for the Pentecostal church in the Cayman Islands, especially the Church of God of Prophecy. A portion of the “Advice to Members” stipulated how sisters should dress. “Dresses must have high enough neck line, low enough hem line, sleeves of reasonable length. No pants

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<sup>48</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 14.

<sup>49</sup> Shosanya, “Seek the Peace of the City, Jeremiah 29:7.”

<sup>50</sup> Boothe, “Women—Ministerial Formation and Ministry,” 19.

<sup>51</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, x.

<sup>52</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, x.

for the sisters, no processing of hair. No lipstick, nail polish and jewelry.”<sup>53</sup> Even though the foregoing was supposed to have been advice, it was enforced as doctrine. One wonders if these had any impact on those who were not attracted to this movement. Boothe suggested that “all ministry needs to be people-oriented and our theological curriculum should include face-to-face encounters with different groups and individuals . . . to include the street people, drug-addicts, disabled persons, etc.”<sup>54</sup>

She further enquires, “Who are the poor, the sinners, the lepers of our society? It is to them ministers are sent, and for them there is the need to be ministerially informed.”<sup>55</sup> Williams also observed, “The worship is often not in dialogue with the world but rather presents a withdrawal from the world. This means that the idols that the world worships are the very ones that are worshipped in the church; the idols of class, race, success, prestige and power.”<sup>56</sup>

The Body of Christ must continue to go into all the world and carry the message of Jesus, who promised that the Holy Spirit would guide into all truth as his followers “empathize with the oppressed, those who are broken and shattered by life’s bewildering experiences, whether guilty or not . . . be alongside the poor, the materially poor, sharing with them a Good News that they can understand, whether or not it is their own fault that they are poor . . . There must be amongst us credibility. It is required of the Lord’s servants that we are not ‘Sunday ginnals’ [tricksters] but are serious and responsible witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>57</sup>

“The church needs to embrace the revolutionary gospel ethic and lifestyle that contradict the greed and covetousness, the self-interest and money-idolatry, the lust for power and ‘run-against’ Jamaican mentality, and the cynicism which dismisses the weak

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<sup>53</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, 87th General Assembly Minutes, Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center, Louisville, Kentucky, September 7-13, 1992, 168.

<sup>54</sup> Boothe, “Women—Ministerial Formation and Ministry,” 19.

<sup>55</sup> Boothe, “Women—Ministerial Formation and Ministry,” 19.

<sup>56</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, x.

<sup>57</sup> Boothe, “Women—Ministerial Formation and Ministry,” 19-20.

and enables even Christians to turn a blind eye to the perpetuation of subtle forms of exploitation, oppression and injustice.”<sup>58</sup> Boothe further said, “The times are *out of joint* and demand that the church rid itself of pride, inertia and lukewarmness and become the word made flesh in the world, the incarnation of the gospel in the Caribbean situation.”<sup>59</sup>

### The Essential Mission of the Church

Robert Benne argues that “the essential mission of the church is to answer God’s call to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and sacrament so that all people may attain eternal salvation. It follows, then, that the church is not primarily a political actor, a social transformer, or an aggressive interest group”<sup>60</sup> Williams disagrees with Benne when he says, “Christian mission must be informed by two warrants at once. Personal salvation must mean at the same time commitment to structural and social change.”<sup>61</sup> Williams also contend that “as the church articulates its mission, it must announce that God sets people free from all prisons. The prisoners must be freed. The weak must be strengthened. The empty must be filled. And all humanity must come to see the salvation of our God.”<sup>62</sup>

Benne believes that if the church focuses on its essential mission, “the most effective public Christian witness of the next century will be done by laypeople who have been formed powerfully in the church, and then are able to connect their Christian formation with the learning and activity of their secular callings.”<sup>63</sup> This has been the

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<sup>58</sup> Boothe, “Women—Ministerial Formation and Ministry,” 21.

<sup>59</sup> Boothe, “Women—Ministerial Formation and Ministry,” 21.

<sup>60</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 93.

<sup>61</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, xi.

<sup>62</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, xi.

<sup>63</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 93.

pattern of the Pentecostal church for years: the priesthood of all believers. The difference is that while Benne wants laypeople to be well prepared, Pentecostals are just coming to grips with education. The twin combination of education and knowledge is unstoppable.

This is good, for education is key to understanding the true meaning of political engagement and the need for collaboration with other groups in the community where we minister and serve those on the margins.

According to Gerson and Wehner, “The role of the church, at least as we interpret it, is to provide individual Christians with a moral framework through which they can work out their duties as citizens and engage the world in a thoughtful way.”<sup>64</sup> They further opined that “Although the Lord calls us to defend the social and economic right of the poor and oppressed, we have mostly remained quiet.”<sup>65</sup>

### **Spirituality, Community and Justice**

Roman Catholics believe that “God created humanity to live and flourish in community, beginning with the foundational relationships of marriage and family and extending outward to other forms of community. Rights and responsibilities indicate the way in which justice ought to govern life on earth.”<sup>66</sup> The Pentecostal churches in Cayman have begun to interact more with their communities with outreach to the young and elderly. The Church of God of Prophecy in Grand Cayman from time to time provides transportation for senior citizens and also provides back-to-school packages for children in different communities. Roman Catholics show “special concern for the poor [that] is modeled after Christ’s sacrificial love and care for the ‘least of these,’ and

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<sup>64</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 36.

<sup>65</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 51.

<sup>66</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 15-16.

supports the dignity of work and the rights of workers give meaning to life in a fallen world by upholding central ways of participating in creation. Solidarity binds the members of communities together in a mutual commitment to the common good.”<sup>67</sup> “Ultimately, the Catholic Church does not seek to impose its views, but to persuade people to see some wisdom in its social teachings. The role of the church, in politics as in all realms, is faithful witness to Jesus Christ.”<sup>68</sup>

According to J. Deotis Roberts, “human beings are social, who desire community and a sense of belonging. This inherent need and desire for community inevitably leads to the formulation of principles governing the behavior of the members of a group.”<sup>69</sup> Roberts agrees with the meaning of political engagement being the collaboration of all groups who are seeking the good of the people within the community. He said, “To have community is to have the political, the forging of principles and laws arising from said community to accomplish the common good, assuming that in a given setting there is consensus on what constitutes the good.”<sup>70</sup>

“Does government exist to construct and protect a realm of human flourishing, or does it exist essentially to restrain evil?”<sup>71</sup> Concerning governing authorities, Hanson rightly states that “though they are to enjoy the loyalty of their subjects, they themselves must submit to the laws of the Creator. It is thus accurate to say that the fundamental principle of biblical politics [is] the subordination of the penultimate authority of human leaders to the ultimate authority of God.”<sup>72</sup> It is the researcher’s opinion that the construct

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<sup>67</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 16.

<sup>68</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 204.

<sup>69</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 108.

<sup>70</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 108.

<sup>71</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 28.

<sup>72</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, 22.

of earthly government is ordained by God to ensure justice for all people. We Pentecostals are part of the community of believers, seeking to pattern Jesus in his earthly ministry and to engage with government and other groups for the purpose of mutual spiritual, economic, and moral support and discipleship.

During his earthly sojourn, Jesus lived within the Roman Empire, whose existence he hardly mentioned. His many challenges came from the religious authorities, not political ones. Gerson and Wehner highlight that “Jesus proclaimed a kingdom ‘not of this world,’ a kingdom based not on an alternative leadership but on transformed lives. Yet Jesus was executed as an enemy of the state.”<sup>73</sup> They also observed that “contemporary leaders, political and religious, found His otherworldly kingdom threatening because it demanded obedience to an authority beyond their own.”<sup>74</sup> Jesus’ followers were ultimately executed for failing to show proper respect (that is, refusing to offer sacrifices) to the Roman emperor.<sup>75</sup> “Much as in Jesus’ own time, political debates today on a wide range of issues divide people, including those in the church. Christians still debate what it means to give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”<sup>76</sup>

Aldred, in *Thinking Outside the Box on Race, Faith and Life*, thinks the lack of understanding is the reason why Christians avoid politics. He said “the reason many Christians are anti-politics is because they have a flawed understanding of what politics is. The pivotal role of Christians in our community is to understand what politics is really

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<sup>73</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 16–17.

<sup>74</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 16–17.

<sup>75</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 16–17.

<sup>76</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 7.

about, then we will not be afraid of it; but be the agents of redemption and the transformation that we are under God.”<sup>77</sup>

### **The Church and Politics**

“The church as an institution is called to maintain its focus on the gospel of redemption, preaching the Word of God instead of placing definitive hope in the temporal and limited power of government or cultural transformation.”<sup>78</sup> Black also said “Thus, the institutional church refrains from direct involvement in politics, focusing instead on molding the hearts of Christians to love and serve people well. Christians, moreover, bear the power of Christ wherever they live or work, so no activity or job escapes the powerful influence of the gospel.”<sup>79</sup> According to Gerson and Wehner, “In the Roman world, Christians challenged the political status quo on any number of issues, including slavery, infanticide, and the status of women.”<sup>80</sup>

Not all in the black churches have a positive view of government, however. “At the centerpiece of this tradition stands the cross, a reminder to view human suffering in light of the One who faced the greatest suffering to free others from it. With the cross and the harsh realities of life in mind, the Black church emphasizes God’s heart for the marginalized and the downcast.”<sup>81</sup> The Church of God in Christ, one of the largest black organizations in the United States, says in its mandate on political issues, “As a church called to witness God’s love, the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) affirms the importance of civic engagement and participation by people of faith. It is imperative that

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<sup>77</sup> Aldred, *Thinking Outside the Box on Race, Faith, and Life*, 141.

<sup>78</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 11.

<sup>79</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 11.

<sup>80</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 16-17.

<sup>81</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 12.

the church's voice and influence be heard and felt amongst political and economic decision-making entities to advocate policies, which advance justice, peace, and equality.”<sup>82</sup> This action by the church is commendable. Bruce Fields shows that “political engagement, however, can cause major repercussions for the believer or the church that chooses to be aware and is willing to inform and mobilize people for political action.”<sup>83</sup>

Benne also gave a similar caution to Lutheran churches: that they “should be very wary about exercising political power on behalf of various causes; such action, he continues, should be careful and infrequent, lest the church damage its universal and transcendent message by involving itself too deeply in coercive and partisan strategies.”<sup>84</sup> “Our church can best motivate us to take up these callings by a vigorous ministry of Word and Sacrament, of worship and teaching, of modeling and practicing.”<sup>85</sup>

Eric Gregory observes, “Followers of the black tradition typically hold that political institutions are not so much a remedial ‘order of providence’ but an aspect of God’s creation with their own normative integrity to pursue the public common good and establish justice.”<sup>86</sup> Many believers, including Pentecostals, often “testify” in church that they are “in the world but not of the world.” This makes Thomas Heilke’s question more interesting. He asked, “How, then, do we live in the world, separate yet in it, rejecting the coercion and violence associated with governance, and struggl[ing] . . . to be separate, vulnerable, and visible Christians while at the same time civil, peaceful, and law-abiding subjects?”<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Talbert W. Swan, *Called to Civic Engagement: Civil Participation and Voter Education Guide*. (Memphis, TN: COGIC Publishing House, 2015), Kindle ed., loc. 47.

<sup>83</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 117.

<sup>84</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 93.

<sup>85</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 93.

<sup>86</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 111.

<sup>87</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 31.

The state, then, is to accomplish two tasks. First, the state must protect the integrity of the spheres of societal organization. It should protect “legitimate human vocation, institution, and organization.” Second, the state should not penalize groups for their religious convictions. Such protection should extend to all religious traditions, not just individuals. Christians can impact the political sphere in a number of ways.<sup>88</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Political engagement is not a myth. It is reality, and it is necessary in the Cayman Islands. Governments are established by God. The apostle Paul states, “Let every person be subject to the ruling authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God” (Rom 13:1). Gerson and Wehner enjoin those who are involved in the delivery of service to the community to be diligent, present, and intentional. They conclude,

At any given moment in a democracy, great issues of justice and morality are at stake. The idea that people of faith can take a sabbatical from politics to collect their thoughts and lick their wounds is a form of irresponsibility. It is, in fact, an idea that could only be embraced by comfortable Christians. If one lives in the neighborhood plagued by poverty, dominated by gangs, and served by failing schools, there is no sabbatical from the failures of politics. Retreating from the cause of justice, even temporarily, is only conceivable for those who have few needs for justice themselves.<sup>89</sup>

As Pope Benedict XVI wrote in his first encyclical, “That influence will be more or less deep, depending on people’s receptivity to church teaching and to divine grace. With the advent of Christianity, the world of politics will not necessarily get better. Progress will depend on the education people receive and on whether they use their freedom well.”<sup>90</sup> Political engagement has opened up a new world of possibilities for the Pentecostal church in the Cayman Islands, particularly the Church of God of Prophecy. As Gerson and Wehner say, “Politics is about the right ordering of our lives together. It

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<sup>88</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 72.

<sup>89</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 34-35.

<sup>90</sup> Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, 184.

cannot be unimportant, because justice is never unimportant.”<sup>91</sup> One must remember, however, that while politics is our duty, it is not our hope. It is a noble calling; it is not our ultimate destination. Christians are useful in public life precisely because they recognize a wide world of eternal values and meaning beyond the political realm.

The gospel of our Lord makes it clear that situations in which there is no freedom are contexts that must be broken through for Christ. As the church grounds its identity in Jesus Christ it cannot any longer be content to coexist side by side with any form of economic and social oppression. The Christian faith must address issues and problems of politics, which for economic and social reasons oppress and make impossible the life of faith.

The Caribbean church must affirm that commitment to the transformation of the world and the individuals is the church’s primary task. In a profound sense, then, the changing of the individual and the transformation of the world are not two separate events but aspect of the same event. It is rather similar to justification and sanctification.<sup>92</sup>

How can the Pentecostal church forget the old forms of missiology in which the churches in North America and Europe would send missionaries to the Caribbean to save the souls of the “natives” while the structures of oppression remained unchanged? Williams concludes by issuing a pointed reminder that “missionary theology does not see the task of the church as improving the quality of life for the Caribbean people in terms of health care, better housing, education and the destruction of poverty that crushes the

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<sup>91</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 136.

<sup>92</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, xi.

souls of our people. Missionary theology has been content to preach to the soul while it neglects the environment in which the soul seeks to make meaning.”<sup>93</sup>

I concur and conclude with Gerson and Wehner that “political engagement is not a luxury. The fighting of a raging fire requires not contemplation but the fire extinguisher.”<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, x.

<sup>94</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 135.

## CHAPTER THREE

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

#### **Introduction**

In his book *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, Paul D. Hanson states,

For the person of faith and for the faith community, there is but one government to which we owe our ultimate allegiance, and that is the universal government whose Ruler is the author and source of all that is just, compassionate, and respectful of the dignity of every creature. Our shared citizenship in that regime places upon us concrete responsibilities in relation to our specific nation-states. And the common task that thereby unites Christians throughout the world is unambiguous and urgent, namely, to clarify the mandate of Scripture for all those whose political starting point is the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

The Bible, being the spiritual road map for the nation of Israel and God's people generally, is clear about the rules of engagement of his people in the public square. How engaged were the prophets in addressing political issues of their day? In the book of Luke, the narrative of Jesus' birth is recorded. Are there any political implications when the angel announced, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2: 10-11). How were the disciples engaged in their society? To what extent did Paul and the other writers in the New Testament engage in their context? I shall begin with the Old Testament.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul D. Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010), Kindle ed., loc. 97.

## How Political Issues Were Addressed in the Old Testament

### In the Garden of Eden and After the Flood

Building a community is God's idea. "And the Lord God said, it is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him an help meet" (Genesis 2:18). The command to multiply and replenish the earth was given to both man and woman (Genesis 1:28). It was not long after that the man and woman were challenged by the adversary, who enticed them to violate God's law (Genesis 3:1-5). Unfortunately, Adam and Eve fell to the temptation of the devil (Gen 3:6-7). God's pronouncement to the serpent was, "Because thou hast done this, . . . I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel" (Gen 3:15). God's promised Messiah was a direct challenge to the serpent's deception. God clothing Adam and Eve with animal skin [Gen 3:21]) also prefigures reconciliation, and consolation for future generations.

Sin is destructive, divisive, and has its consequences. The increase in the population on earth meant an increase of sin and rebellion against God (Gen 6:1). But Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord. God, who has control over his creation, punished the entire world except Noah and his wife, and his sons and their wives, with the flood; after this he set in place the new rules of engagement for human relationships. Wayne Grudem in *Politics According to the Bible* asserts that "government was appointed by God in the first place!"<sup>2</sup> After the flood, when Noah and his family came out of the ark, God required punishment for the crime of murder. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man"<sup>3</sup> (Gen 9:5-

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<sup>2</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Politics According to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 77-78.

<sup>3</sup> Grudem, *Politics According to the Bible*, 77-78.

6). Life is sacred, and therefore God outlined to Noah the punishment for murder.

Grudem contends that God determines the requirement to carry out punishment if a life is taken. “Once this principle is established, then the imposition of lesser penalties for lesser crimes is also validated, since if a government has the right to carry out the most severe kind of punishment, then it certainly has the right to carry out lesser punishments for lesser crimes as well.”<sup>4</sup>

The constant struggle between good and evil followed in every succeeding generation. Sin is repulsive and requires restraint and punishment if the society is to be ordered and safe. From God’s directives to Noah, it is clear that some form of government was necessary to enforce that sinful human beings treat each other with respect and ultimately uphold the law of God. God’s laws were also given to protect the weak and to promote the health or wholeness of his people. The books of Exodus and Leviticus outline a governing structure for God’s people to order their daily lives. There are 613 laws, including the Ten Commandments, which cover worship of God, health and personal welfare of individuals, and proper and safe interaction between people.

### Abraham

God’s promise to Abraham was, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth

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<sup>4</sup> Grudem, *Politics According to the Bible*, 77-78.

will be blessed through you.”<sup>5</sup> God is always faithful in his promises. Preparation for his relationship with ancient Israel began centuries before with one man. God “initiated His plans for Israel . . . when He established a relationship with Abram” (Gen 15:18). His name was changed from Abram (“exalted father”) to Abraham (“father of a multitude,” [Gen 17:5]).<sup>6</sup>

### Theocratic Government

Theocratic government is defined “as a form of Government in which God (or deity) is recognized as the king or immediate ruler.”<sup>7</sup> The word *theocracy* was coined by Flavius Josephus in the first century and means “ascribing the authority and power to God, and . . . persuading all the people to have regard to him, as the author of all things.”<sup>8</sup> The historical records show that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were the founding fathers of the nation of Israel. On numerous occasions, they would build altars and sacrifice to God. Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, had twelve sons from whom the twelve tribes was made up. Joseph was the son of Jacob and Rachael, the best loved of his four wives. Joseph was set apart by Jacob as his best loved son, to the consternation of his eleven brothers; they became jealous to the point of being hateful.

Joseph made life difficult for himself when he shared his dreams of his father and brothers bowing down to him (Gen 37:5-11). He would often report to his father about his brothers’ evil behavior (Gen 37:2). At last, when Jacob sent Joseph to see how his brothers were doing, they tore off his “coat of many colors” and were ready to kill him

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<sup>5</sup> Gen 12:1-3. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations in this chapter are from the New International Version.

<sup>6</sup> United Church of God, “God’s Commitment to Abraham and His Descendants,” February 16, 2011, Beyond Today, accessed October 29, 2017, <https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/the-united-states-and-britain-in-bible-prophecy/gods-commitment-to>.

<sup>7</sup> Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Clark, NJ: The Lawbook Exchange, 2006), 15.

<sup>8</sup> Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, 15.

(Gen 37:22). Instead, he was sold as a slave to Midianites merchants who were on their way to Egypt (Gen 37:28). He was subsequently sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard (Gen 37:36). Joseph was put in charge of all that Potiphar had because the Lord was with him (Gen 39:4-5).

Joseph's refusal to acquiesce to the urging of Potiphar's wife to lie with her landed him in prison, where the king's prisoners were kept (Gen 39:20). "But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison" (Gen 39:21). He was soon put in charge of all the other prisoners. In prison he met Pharaoh's baker and butler and interpreted their dreams, which ultimately made him a candidate to interpret Pharaoh's dream.

Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream and gave suggestions for dealing with the years of plenty and the years of famine. In describing this event, the writer of Psalm 105:21-22 used governmental language by saying, "[Pharaoh] made [Joseph] lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: to bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom." Pharaoh then elevated him to the second in command of the Egyptian political structure. Initially, seventy-four people belonging to the family of Jacob went to Egypt to escape the seven years of famine; and subsequently they became Pharaoh's servants. They grew into a mighty nation who were suppressed by the Egyptian people. God's direct intervention through his servant Moses brought down Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt for failing to listen to God's instruction to let his people go! God brought Israel out of Egypt "with a strong hand, and with a stretched-out arm" (Ps 137:12).

The Old Testament laws of governance were there for the good of the people and to restrain wrongdoing. There was political turmoil in Egypt, because the king tried to

stem the rapid growth among the children of Israel. The Pharaoh who “knew not Joseph” (Exodus 1:8) issued a deadly edict on the lives of the male children in Israel. It was during this time of threat that Moses was born.

### **Moses the Deliverer**

Moses’ life was miraculously spared. He was given back to his birth mother to take care of him until it was time to turn him over to his adopted mother – Pharaoh’s daughter. Scripture says he was educated in all the art of the Egyptians, yet, *“By faith Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people (slaves) of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,”* (Hebrews 11: 24, 25). He escaped into exile when he tried to deliver the Israelites one by one and end up killing and Egyptian.

After 40 years in exile God called and sent Moses to the Egyptian Pharaoh to tell him to let His people go. When Pharaoh refused Moses called forth signs and wonders under the direction of God. Jim Wallis described their deliverance this way, “A slave people are freed through the mighty acts of God. The Exodus story has been an inspiration for oppressed people ever since, and Moses’s name is synonymous with the word liberation.”<sup>9</sup> When the entire nation of slaves was delivered, it was God through Moses stepping in on behalf of his people who were poor and oppressed.

Moses stands out as the preeminent figure of the Old Testament, he loved God and the people, he taught them God’s standards for dealing with each other, particularly

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<sup>9</sup> Jim Wallis, *Faith Works: How Faith-based Organizations are Changing Lives, Neighborhoods, and America.* (Berkeley, CA: Page Mill Press, 2000, 2001), 268.

strangers and those who were poor. “Since then no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face” (Deut. 34:10). That remained true until Moses’ own prophecy was fulfilled, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren, you shall listen to him” (Deut. 18: 15).

### **The People of Israel Under Theocratic Government**

The nation of Israel covenanted to accept all that the Lord commanded thus becoming the congregation (Exodus 19: 8). According to Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz, “Yahweh, through this act of redemption, builds a house for himself, a royal sanctuary on the mountain of his inheritance.”<sup>10</sup> Several laws were enacted to ensure equity and fairness among God’s people. In Deuteronomy 15, they were commanded to release debt owed by their fellow Israelites every seven years. In year of jubilee, the 50<sup>th</sup> year, land was to be returned to the sellers. Tithes and gleaning of the field were not just acts of charity but a structured justice system as Ronald Sider explained, an “institutionalized mechanism to prevent the kind of economic divisions where a few people would possess all the capital while others had no productive resources.”<sup>11</sup>

He further highlighted the Scripture that, “property owners did not have the right to harvest everything in their fields. They were to leave some for the poor.”<sup>12</sup> Conn & Ortiz concluded that “Poverty and oppression were also enemies to overcome in the mission of this new community. The stated reality that there would always be poor people in the land only underlined Israel’s calling to be ‘open-handed towards your

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<sup>10</sup> Harvie M. Conn, and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City, & the People of God*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 97.

<sup>11</sup> Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1997 (20th Ann. Revision), 71.

<sup>12</sup> Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, 91.

brothers and toward the poor and needy’ Deut. 15:11.”<sup>13</sup> The nation of Israel thrived as a community as long as they were living in obedience to the will and commandment of God. It is quite clear that from earliest time the precedence has been set for public engagement. The children of Israel were God’s special people who were required to care about others. They were under the direct rule of the sovereign God under the leadership of God’s appointed servants such as Moses, Joshua, the Judges and the Priesthood. Hanson gave an account of Israel’s relationship with the God who accompanied and “directed them through the changing conditions of their historical existence.”<sup>14</sup> He said, “Israel’s sacred writings took the form of an epic, elaborated with laws, psalms, laments, and proverbs.”<sup>15</sup>

### The Monarchy

The nation of Israel failed because they broke their covenanted pledge to God. The priesthood and judges also failed. They did not exercise their God given authority over their children. The moral depravity of Eli’s sons, the office of judge had been tainted through the corruption of Samuel’s sons, and the military had suffered a stinging defeat and loss of the Ark of the Covenant. As a result of these adversities the elders said to Samuel, “Give us a king, that we may be like the other nations” (1 Sam 8:5). God’s consent to the request of the elders came with stern warning. “The king will conscript the young into his court and army, he will levy taxes to support royal building projects, and finally, “you will be his slaves” (1 Sam 8:17).

Later, the people confessed to Samuel saying, “We have added to all our sins the evil of demanding a king for ourselves.”<sup>16</sup> Samuel in a significant way told the elders that

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<sup>13</sup> Conn, and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City, & the People of God*, 99.

<sup>14</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, 12.

<sup>16</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, 15.

they have sinned in asking for a king, but he assured them of his continuing support through prayer and instruction. Samuel encouraged them to, “Only fear the LORD, and serve him faithfully with all your heart; for consider what great things he has done for you. But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king” (1 Sam 12:24–25). Bertil Albrektson opined “that the transition was not without its difficulties. The people’s wish to have a king like all other nations is seen as apostasy from Yahweh, the true King of Israel. Yahweh said to Samuel, they have not rejected you: it is I whom they have rejected from being king over them”<sup>17</sup> (1 Sam 8:7).

### The Prophets

Throughout the history of the nation of Israel, God spoke to them through the fathers and the prophets; they were constantly reminded of God’s precepts and the consequences for observing or violating them. When Israel forgot their past (as slaves) and started to oppress the poor among them, several prophets were sent by God to be a voice for the poor, slaves, and marginalize people of the society. The prophets foretold of Israel’s destruction because they violated God’s instructions and oppressed the poor during times of prosperity. Because of sinful behavior the nation of Israel was divided in two, Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Within the context of these two nations they were basically divided into two classes of people: the rich and the poor. The office of prophet affirms the biblical political principle that for the person of faith there is only one ultimate governing authority, God. Hanson says, “The office of the prophet was charged

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<sup>17</sup> Bertil Albrektson, “Prophecy and Politics in the Old Testament,” accessed January 22, 2018, [https://www.google.com/search?source=hp&ei=dflkWp6iH8XAtQWTvIDgCQ&q=Prophecy+and+Politics+in+the+Old+Testament+By+BERTIL+ALBREKTSON&oq=Prophecy+and+Politics+in+the+Old+Testament+By+BERTIL+ALBREKTSON&gs\\_l=psyab.3...2081.2081.0.3157.1.1.0.0.0.110.110.0j1.1.0....0...1c.1.64.psy-ab..0.0.0....0.im2SoIZAKRQ](https://www.google.com/search?source=hp&ei=dflkWp6iH8XAtQWTvIDgCQ&q=Prophecy+and+Politics+in+the+Old+Testament+By+BERTIL+ALBREKTSON&oq=Prophecy+and+Politics+in+the+Old+Testament+By+BERTIL+ALBREKTSON&gs_l=psyab.3...2081.2081.0.3157.1.1.0.0.0.110.110.0j1.1.0....0...1c.1.64.psy-ab..0.0.0....0.im2SoIZAKRQ).

with the responsibility of representing that authority amidst world governments and human authorities.”<sup>18</sup> Prophets who witnessed an act of injustice or oppression would condemn it, in the name of the heavenly Judge, whose court proceedings they faithfully recorded and reported.

Several prophets spoke to issues of their day, with prophetic utterances going beyond the border of their communities. The prophet Amos’ public ministry of political engagement started when God sent him, from Judah (the southern kingdom), to Israel (northern kingdom) with a prophetic announcement against the injustice that were done to the poor and needy. The Israelites who were instructed to care for the poor and needy, were using them for unjust gains; there was no law to protect the poor. The Israelites even ‘sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes’ (Amos 2:6b); they took bribes to condemn the righteous thereby violating God’s law. Therefore, Amos’ message from God to them was, “I will make you groan like a wagon loaded down with sheaves of grain” (Amos 2: 13-16). Amos further rebukes the rich: “You trample on the poor and force him to give you grain. Therefore, though you have built stone mansions, you will not live in them; though you have planted lush vineyards, you will not drink their wine. For I know how many are your offenses and how great your sins. You oppress the righteous and take bribes and you derive the poor of justice in the courts (Amos 5:11-12).

Wallis points out that the reality of ‘community’ is evident in how we treat the weak, marginalize, vulnerable members of society. He said, “When people are excluded,

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<sup>18</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, 16.

there will be consequences both practically and spiritually.”<sup>19</sup> I strongly support Wallis’ statement that is endorsed by several scriptures. “The biblical prophets raised the issue of distribution again and again and often in ways that were both creative and controversial. Prophetic speech and instructions to change were directed at the wealthy and powerful, while the dignity of the poor and oppressed was vigorously defended by those who spoke for God.”<sup>20</sup> Villafane quotes from Karl Barth who said, “God always take his stand unconditionally and passionately on this side and this side alone: against the lofty and on behalf of the lowly, against those who enjoy right and privilege and on behalf of those who are denied it and deprived of it.”<sup>21</sup> Isaiah the prophet said, “The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant” (Isa 24:4-5).

The Prophets view reality from the perspective of God’s universal moral order, and they announce the consequences of disloyalty and rejection of the commandments, dire consequences for the monarchy of politics and the world of nature alike. The prophet Nathan confronted David with his abuse of power and brought him to a point of conviction before God for the sins of adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah.<sup>22</sup> “Elijah pronounced judgment on Ahab for deceiving Naboth out of his ancestral land and killing him in the process (1 Kings 21).”<sup>23</sup> Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann believes “we may readily characterize preaching as speaking truth

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<sup>19</sup> Wallis, *Faith Works*, 84.

<sup>20</sup> Wallis, *Faith Works*, 129.

<sup>21</sup> Eldin Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 37

<sup>22</sup> 2 Sam 11:12; Ps 51.

<sup>23</sup> Omar C. Garcia, “1 Kings 21,” Bible Teaching Notes, accessed October 29, 2017, <http://www.bibleteachingnotes.com/templates/System/details.asp?id=29183&fetch=8295>.

to power.”<sup>24</sup> Hanson said, “No office in the Bible conveys the seriousness with which the God of Israel takes the political realm more than prophecy. The notion it enlists to depict the essential relation of human government to divine government is political in origin, namely, treaty, or more precisely, covenant.”<sup>25</sup>

Brueggemann cites several examples from the Old Testament but believes “the primal case of truth to power in the Old Testament is Moses speaking truth to Pharaoh.”<sup>26</sup> Brueggemann also believes that preachers today should emulate the prophets in speaking truth to powerful people and laments that Christian preaching and practice have been diluted. He speaks of “the extent to which our practices witness not to the God crucified and risen but to the constraints of technological, therapeutic, militaristic, consumerism”<sup>27</sup> and encourages preachers to speak the truth of God's Word even if it is not popular, as the prophets did. Trust in the Holy One means, as an individual and as a nation, imitating the divine example. Predominantly it means showing special loving attention to the weak, the ill, the friendless, and the alien.

### Esther, Daniel, and the Three Hebrew Young Men

In both the Old and New Testament there are examples of incidents where Christians as well as the church had to engage with those in authority. In Esther 2, the king appointed Esther (a Jew, whose true identity had not been revealed) queen of Persia. This is confirmation that God can use whom he pleases to accomplish his purpose in the earth. As is evident, Esther is now in position so that later, through the guidance of Mordecai and her intervention, the Jewish people were spared from annihilation. Esther is

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<sup>24</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Word That Redescribes the World: The Bible and Discipleship*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 20-21.

<sup>25</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, 16.

<sup>26</sup> Brueggemann, *Word That Redescribes the World*, 20, 21.

<sup>27</sup> Brueggemann, *Word That Redescribes the World*, 112.

a good example of a leader who remembered from whence she came and did not allow pride to blur her vision but retained a spirit of meekness, humility, and submission. Daniel and his friends overcame numerous challenges while serving in the king's court in Babylon; but triumph through the help of the Lord.

The prophet Jeremiah warned the nation because of their backsliding when he said, Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbors work for nothing and does not give them their wages..." (Jer 22:13). Hanson said that "the legacy of the political model of prophecy is profound as it sets forth the clear distinction between the ultimate authority of God and the limited, delegated authority of every human government and defends the equality of every human under God's rule and bitterly opposes anyone who violates the rights and the irreducible dignity of subjects, regardless of rank."<sup>28</sup>

The evil and rebellion committed against the Lord finally caused them to be taken into exile. This however tempered by the assurance given in Jeremiah 29:7. David Shosanya said the Jeremiah paradigm, "is profound in that God is restoring hope in a people who were suffering from "social, geographical and political dislocation."<sup>29</sup> Education for the people of Israel in the city of Babylon was critical for them to fulfill the plan of God while in captivity. Villafane, in contextualizing the importance urban education, said, "Contextualization implies a commitment to the shalom of the city. The city, as context of training and ministry, is looked upon as positive locus of God's redemptive activity. A wholistic gospel is presented that emphasizes both evangelism and

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<sup>28</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, 19.

<sup>29</sup> David Shosanya, "Seek the Peace of the City," presentation, Caribbean Leadership Conference, Grand Cayman, 2017.

social justice in the seeking of the shalom of the city (Jeremiah 29:7).<sup>30</sup>

Robert Linthicum in *City of God, City of Satan* cautioned against the self-seekers within the city who are always looking for a competitive edge over others instead of the good of all. He also addressed those who have worked hard in communities to build it and then turn around and destroy what they have built. He said,

There is something in every human that wants to “beat the system.” We create systems to bring life and direction to our communities, but our uncontrollable need to turn everything to our advantage corrupts these same systems . . . Each of us can readily recall numerous examples of pastors or church leaders will drag down the very institution they once worked tirelessly to build up—simply because they cannot cope with community changes going on near the church or with opposition to their policies. Often such leaders work to protect the “purity” of the church even when such protection destroys its unity and peace.<sup>31</sup>

Jeremiah 29:7 says to “seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” The wisdom in heeding God’s instruction in seeking the peace of the city said Shosanya it a reminder that “God’s people in every city should hold on to the truth, spiritual conviction, and to keep hope and courage alive now and in the future, that God will always and ultimately act decisively in human history in the face of overwhelming odds on behalf of His people.”<sup>32</sup> I also agree with Stone and Wolfteich that, “. . . though the city is a place of distractions, busyness, and frenzied activity, and though it is often imagined in Scriptures as a place of unrest, idolatry, and wickedness, it is also the holy habitation of God.”<sup>33</sup> This is further confirmation of the need for the church to engage

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<sup>30</sup> Eldin Villafane, “The Jeremiah Paradigm for the City,” *Christianity and Crisis* 52, nos. 16/17 (November 16, 1992).

<sup>31</sup> Robert C. Linthicum, *City of God, City of Satan: A Biblical Theology of the Urban Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 124.

<sup>32</sup> Shosanya, “Seek the Peace of the City.”

<sup>33</sup> Bryan P. Stone and Claire E. Wolteich, *Sabbath in the City: Sustaining Urban Pastoral Excellence*. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 78.

politically; because people made in the image of God are in the city and, “God is in the midst of the city” (Psalm 46:5).

## The New Testament

### Jesus

There are enough evidences from New Testament theologians that Luke’s narrative of the birth of Jesus unfolds amid a heavily contested political field. Gerd Theissen notes that “the political stance in Luke and Acts is a matter of political pragmatics flexible enough to engage a wide range of political situations.”<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the birth narratives of Jesus are full of anticipation that the time had come for the deliverance of Israel and the redemption of Jerusalem from the hands of its enemies. This, translated positively, could mean that Jesus was born a political leader to restore Israel to peace and justice as a fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant and renewal of the Davidic kingdom (Luke 1:32-33).

Hence, Theissen explains the story about the birth of Christ to show the political revolution agenda: “Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the whole Roman world. So, Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.”<sup>35</sup> Joseph went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born (Luke 2:4-6). The political agenda was confirmed when the angel announced the birth of Jesus Christ to the shepherds who took the message to King Herod: “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

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<sup>34</sup> Gerd Theissen, *Gospel Writing and Church Politics: A Socio-Rhetorical Approach*, Chuen King Lecture Series 3 (Hong Kong: Chung Chi College, 2001), 95-96.

<sup>35</sup> Theissen, *Gospel Writing and Church Politics*, 95-96.

Therefore, it is undeniable that Jesus' birth and ministry as portrayed by the Evangelist was a direct confrontation of the injustice of Judean practices. According to M. P. Burns, "The Messiah would restore the kingdom, bring about a new Israel, free the people from bondage, bring an end to suffering, war and injustice, restore the relationship between God and his people."<sup>36</sup> Pope Benedict XVI concurs that "the birth of Jesus in the city of David is placed within the overarching framework of world history, even though Caesar was quite unaware of the difficult journey that these ordinary people were making on his account."<sup>37</sup>

Hence, Christians' engagement (inclusive of Pentecostals) with politics is not an issue of doubt, as Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith, was born to liberate and restore people to the image of God. Amos Yong notes that "there is no doubt that the titles Luke ascribes to Jesus—such as 'Savior' and 'Lord' belonged to Caesar, whose cult celebrated the provision of health, protection, and material sustenance as belonging to the domain of the emperor."<sup>38</sup> Yong elaborates by saying that "the origins of the emperors often were traced to divine sources and heralded by auspicious events including the divine impregnation of human mothers."<sup>39</sup>

Thus, "the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit coming upon a virgin as well as His message being announced as good news would have directly challenged the Judean religious cult."<sup>40</sup> The church of the apostles understood this as they stood their ground in

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<sup>36</sup> M. P. Burns, *The Vision of Faith: Love and the Renewal of the Church*, 4th ed. (Lulu Press Inc. Morrisville NC: 2012), 55.

<sup>37</sup> Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger), *The Infancy Narratives: Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Image, 2012), 58.

<sup>38</sup> Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostal and Political Theology*, The Cadbury Lectures 2009. *Sacra Doctrina: Christian Theology for a Postmodern Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 103.

<sup>39</sup> Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 103.

<sup>40</sup> Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 103.

order to please God, not men. This is the mandate! We must seek to please God. The Christian Church should be seen upholding and living out their mandate daily.

The magi asked Herod, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his Star in the east and are come to worship him” (Matthew 2:2). This was disturbing to Herod, to say the least! A Jewish king! Just to mention that a king is born is political language! A king was born to a people under the colonial power of Rome and their cronies, who rule the province of Palestine. This was a political bombshell; a question from these unsuspecting innocent travelers unknowingly challenged the status quo. Herod scrambled to put all this in context by asking the theologians about the prophecy of Christ’s birth, so that he could go and “worship” him also (Matthew 2:8).

However, the wise men were warned of God not to go back to Herod. “Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men” (Matthew 2:16). It is clear that Herod perceived Jesus as a threat, and in his jealous rage, he killed innocent children in the hope that Jesus would have been one of them.

King Jesus would ultimately be a target of both the religious and political authorities of his day because of his popularity with the people. His job description in Luke 4:18-19 speaks of ministry “to the poor; healing of the broken hearted, preach[ing] deliverance to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind . . . preach[ing] the acceptable year of the Lord.” He was on a collision course with the religious groups for this and because of his “controversial teachings.” Erwin Lutzer suggested that when Jesus

was asked if tribute should to be given to Caesar, and he said, ““Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s’ (Matthew 22:21). He was establishing a principle never uttered before. He taught that we owe loyalty to two spheres. Obviously, our loyalty to God is a higher loyalty, but we dare not shirk our responsibility to Caesar.”<sup>41</sup> Christians should be good citizens in the state where they live, insofar as the state does not enact laws which conflict with the Word of God and the Christian’s conscience. Michael Gerson and Peter Wehner said “It makes a very great difference whether people live in freedom or servitude; whether government promotes a culture of life or a culture of death; whether the state is a guardian or an enemy of human dignity. And whatever form of government we live under, we as individuals are enjoined to be mindful of our own civic duties.”<sup>42</sup>

Jesus’ work was one of liberation during his brief sojourn on planet earth. Scripture says, “... God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him” (Acts 10:38). If we are going to follow Jesus, then the church has a mandate from God to be involved in every aspect of society. Christ’s ministry, his presence, his words and actions healed the spiritual and physical wounds of those he encountered. One of the great examples of his public engagement was his encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well at a place called Sychar. It was noon and the disciples all left for the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman came to draw water and Jesus engaged her in conversation. Ignoring the many social barriers which existed

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<sup>41</sup> Erwin W. Lutzer, “Christians and Politics: Serving Two Masters?”, 2004, Moody Church Media, accessed November 14, 2017, <https://www.moodymedia.org/articles/christians-and-politics-serving-two-masters/>.

<sup>42</sup> Michael Gerson and Peter Wehner, *City of Man: Religion and Politics in the New Era* (Chicago IL: Moody Publishers, 2010), 24-25.

between the Jews and the Samaritans, Jesus reached out to a woman who seemed to be a social misfit in her community. Jesus built a verbal bridge to get to her personal life and soul; this bridge was necessary to tear down the barriers, making her thirsty for more than the natural water.

As Jesus is portrayed in the Gospels, we find a politics of critical engagement with the Roman and Jewish leaders, and the uncompromising insistence on the sole lordship of the heavenly Father. Since the courageous witness of Jesus threatened both the Roman control of a rebellious, sprawling empire and the Jewish leaders' deadly fear of any movement that could become the catalyst of revolt, it was unavoidable that Jesus took his place in the line of witnesses to God's sovereignty whom the rulers of this world sought to silence. Presidents and administrations today often surround themselves with religious advisers who usually agree with their policies and ethos in the first place. This makes it difficult for these people to fulfill the role of prophet.

### Commissioning His Followers

Jesus commissioned his followers to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18-20), so engagement is absolutely necessary if we are to fulfill his command. Political engagement is firmly established in the New Testament. This, however, has been quarantined and polarized by a church of today that is so internally focused, that we have lost the external focus of the great commission. As his followers we are to engage the authorities in fulfillment of his instructions. The disciples in their quest to fulfill the divine mandate for Jesus were engaged with the authorities as they sought to advance the cause of Christ. Allen Brent suggests that the early Christian community has left the

contemporary church a record of the apostles who were prepared to countenance a far closer engagement with contemporary Greco-Roman imperial culture.<sup>43</sup> I share the concern of Swanson & Rusaw that, “We have confused method with message and have often been more concerned with maintaining what we are doing than with innovating new solutions to meet the current and future needs and sharing the timeless message of Christ.”<sup>44</sup>

Many observers suggest that white evangelical Protestant churches serve to mobilize their members into politics, while others argue that they encourage withdrawal from political life. Christian involvement in politics has been a much-debated subject at the center of Christian discourse for centuries. Many believers are taught that Christians should not seek engagement in the political realm because faith and politics do not mix. Pentecostals cannot separate religious realities from human social life. A closer observation of how churches engage with political issues shows that the church and state relationship should be one of collaboration and not partisan. One observable stance linked to this interrelationship is the Pentecostal churches’ understanding of the governance system of the country. Oliver Woshinsky stated that “education stands as the single best predictor of political involvement. Every study of politics has shown that, whatever the setting, the more years of formal schooling people have, the more likely it is that they will engage in political activities.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Allen Brent, *A Political History of Early Christianity* (London: T&T Clark International, 2009), 166.

<sup>44</sup> Eric Swanson, and Rick Rusaw, The Externally Focus Quest: Becoming The Best Church for the Community, (John Whily & Sons Inc. 949 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103-1741, 2010), 23.

<sup>45</sup> Oliver Woshinsky, *Explaining Politics: Culture, Institutions, and Political Behavior* (Maddison Avenue, New York: Routledge, 2008), 89.

This shows that the early church and classical Pentecostals are both established on the same scriptural background (Acts 2). Henceforth Pentecostals everywhere, including the Cayman Islands, should be undertaking pastoral care, which was the burden of the early church. On a negative note, Brent argues that a comparison of the early church ministry within the contemporary Pentecostal churches show that today it is popular to promote various causes by defying the government, disobeying the law, and defending these actions on the basis of evil conscience.<sup>46</sup> Graham Ward, agreeing with Brent, observes that “Pentecostal theological reflections must include moments of scriptural engagement.”<sup>47</sup>

Pentecostal theological reflection as a “people of the biblical book” should recognize political participation/engagement by the church as part of the spiritual teachings. Thus, the contemporary Pentecostal churches’ encounter with the Holy Spirit has to be in continuity with that of apostolic experience. Brent confirms that “the early church political revolutions makes a claim that contemporary society has to be embraced, engaged with, and transformed so as to produce the assumption of power by what had previously been a persecuted and minority movement.”<sup>48</sup> Therefore, as the roots of Pentecostalism are linked with the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2), Spirit-empowered ministry could be marked by anointed proclamations against unjust practices in society. Throughout the Bible, God tasked his people to care for the poor, the oppressed, the defenseless, and widows and orphans (Isaiah 1:17; Jeremiah 22:3). The church must not only be visible but also a vibrant entity in its community. It is expected that the church

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<sup>46</sup> Brent, *Political History of Early Christianity*, 167.

<sup>47</sup> Graham Ward, *The Politics of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 99.

<sup>48</sup> Brent, *Political History of Early Christianity*, 167.

speaks out against wrong and engages political leaders in a conversation about the importance of moral and ethical values in making a society stronger

### John the Baptist

John the Baptist was questioned by the religious leaders of his day, he made it clear that he was not the Christ. Declaring himself as the “voice of one crying in the wilderness,” he made it clear that he was only making the way for the Lord. His popularity led the surrounding communities to journey to the river Jordon to witness the new itinerant crudely dressed baptizer calling them to repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matthew’s account said, *“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance”* (Matthew 3: 7-8).

Having engaged these Jewish leaders, he subsequently announced the pending entrance of the Messiah Jesus Christ to them, that there is one “mightier than I coming … who shall baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Matthew 3:11). In Matthew 11, in commenting on John the Baptist, Jesus talked about his righteous character and reputation, pointing out how John refused to compromise his belief and acquiesce to the wishes of the authorities. John stood against the odds and told Herod that it was not right for him to have his brother’s wife—a stance which cost him his life. Yes, John the Baptist fearlessly challenged Herod about something as personal as his sexual morality and paid for it with his head.

Educating our people biblically on the need for political engagement without being partisan under all types of government is of utmost importance. Hence, according to B. J. Van Der Walt and Rita Swanepoel, “we can safely say that the balance of Christian reflection clearly tends to support constitutional democracy, which seeks to channel and contain the expressions of popular will through a constitutional framework which protects citizens against violations of their just rights.”<sup>49</sup> However, while this researcher supports political engagement, Pentecostal values must be at the core of the Pentecostal church as opposed to side-lining them. Paul’s letter to the Romans outlined the responsibilities of Christian believers as they relate to the governing authorities. The political position of the apostle Paul is even more complex, and many fine articles in recent years have challenged older assumptions. It is important to recognize that the fundamental biblical principle of God’s sole authority is affirmed in the leading verse of Paul’s discourse when he implored the Roman brethren to:

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God … For, rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor (Romans 13:1-7).

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<sup>49</sup> B. J. Van Der Walt and Rita Swanepoel, *Christianity and Democracy in South Africa: Christian Responsibility for Political Reflection and Service*, Institute for Reformational Studies (Potchefstroom, RSA: Potchefstroom Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys, 1996), 114.

Christians cannot afford to sit back and be silent on political immorality and corruption; whether it is same-sex marriage or abortion, they must speak up regardless of the consequences. Romans 13 refers to elected officials as “God’s ministers,” and therefore they must be held accountable for the proper governance of the nation. In 1 Peter 2:13-14, we are implored to “submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.”

### Apocalyptic

Hanson said “Apocalyptic politics occurred between the second century BCE and the end of the second century CE. The literary expressions of apocalyptic in the Bible are most notably Daniel and the book of Revelation.”<sup>50</sup> These authors pointed out in the message communicated to them that God has set the plans in place from the beginning and for the consummation of the world systems. Hanson concurs that “there is but one ultimate Ruler of the universe and that no human ruler has the right to demand the unqualified allegiance of his subjects. This political model gives assurance in modern times for Christian communities suffering under religious persecution.”<sup>51</sup>

The apocalyptic model refers to an adaptation of prophetic faith to the bleak setting of persecution where the faithful suffer at the hands either of their compatriots or foreign adversaries. The apocalyptic model “gives expression to the central confession of biblical politics, and the visions of the apocalyptic writings depict God’s final victory over all opposition and function to preserve the hope of the faithful, even in the face of a world that seems to have come under the control of the Evil One and its hosts.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, 24.

<sup>51</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, 24.

<sup>52</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, 24.

We should never lose sight of the fact that Apocalyptic literatures already show that righteousness will ultimately triumph. In our Post-modern world the reality of sin and its effects have to be acknowledged. There are intense natural and spiritual needs in urban areas; urban living and ministry can present enormous challenge such as in the Cayman Islands a place where God desires for his people to flourish and to experience shalom. Political engagement if properly understood by the Pentecostal church inclusive of the Church of God of Prophecy, will impact all aspects of life. Believers in Christ have the gospel of peace and must demonstrate and tell the good news that God loves the world and can make a difference in every one's life.

Many in the community of faith still need to be taught how to engage in order to strengthen their Biblical base. Sider suggests that, "If a mere fraction of rich Christians would begin to apply biblical principles of economic sharing, the world would be astounded."<sup>53</sup> God wants people to show compassion to each other, embrace justice and lobby for structural changes that will bring shalom to all, particularly those who are poor, oppressed and marginalized; for giving to the poor is lending to God (Proverb 19:17). Apocalyptic model of government upholds the belief that God has the final word/verdict in every department of life past, present future!

### **Conclusion**

We have looked at the Old and New Testaments and can conclude that Political engagement has firm Biblical and theological foundation on which the church of today can stand. We have a clear mandate and precedence for the rules of engagement to bring honor to the Lord and be that voice for the voiceless in the communities where we work

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<sup>53</sup> Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, 87.

and do ministry. Like Moses who spoke in the courts of Pharaoh, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Let my people go ...,’ we need to echo the sentiments for the poor and be their voice. “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Proverb 31:8-9).

Political engagement/participation is a matter of choices we must make for the glory of God and the blessings of our communities. James Hunter said, “In every choice and decision we make, we either help to overcome the forces of barbarism . . . or acquiesce to the forces.”<sup>54</sup> As we engage with our community like our Lord and the many Christians before us did in theirs, there are certain things we should ensure as we go forward. Hunter quoting Chuck Colson, spoke of his four objectives: “First, Christians must be good citizens. Second, Christians must carry out their civic duty in every walk of life. Third, Christians must be engaged directly in politics. Fourth, the church must act as the conscience of society, as a restraint against the misuse of governing authority.”<sup>55</sup>

As we engage politically, we should remember that Christopher Wright said, “The challenge for us is to articulate Jesus’ message of liberation in a way that connects with people’s experience and offers a place of liberation in the Christian community; pointing to the redeeming work of God in the past and to the only hope of liberation that our world can have for the future.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> James Davison Hunter, *To Change the world; The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity In The Late Modern World* (Oxford University Press Inc. 198 Madison Avenue, New York, 2010), 8.

<sup>55</sup> Hunter, *To Change the world*, 8.

<sup>56</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010) 112-113,

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PROJECT DESIGN

#### **Introduction**

The Cayman Islands has seen significant social, religious, financial, and infrastructural changes over the years. It is an affluent community, the fifth in the world in per-capita income, with people from 135 nations of the world. Cayman has become that cultural melting pot of the Caribbean, and so, those in governance have a great challenge to engage with the various groups. The Christian church is also experiencing exponential growth due to the variegated forms of worship brought in by people of different cultures. While the public square in the Cayman Islands welcomes the voices representing a significant number of new religions and philosophies (who are championing the human rights agenda), some of the Christian churches are still indecisive about letting their voice be heard on issues in the community.

In many churches within Cayman society, there are powerful worship sessions, much preaching and praying within the walls of buildings, streaming on the Internet, broadcasting on radio and television; yet the church is more divided than before along denominational, ethnic, and cultural lines. Is that all that God desires from the Christian church? Should the church be carrying out a significant role in society? One wonders about the level of communication and collaboration that goes on between the government, community, and church, and if these various groups should come together; what benefit would that bring to the lives of people in the nation? This writer views interaction and collaborative effort between government, church groups, and other

organizations in the society as political engagement. Politics refers to the process by which groups of people within a society make decisions; that is essential for the well-being of all. “This is the politics that seeks the welfare of people, builds up community and works for the good of all, Christians should be at the forefront of that kind of politics.”<sup>1</sup>

Many people, Christians included, are wary when they hear the word *politics*. Some exhibit phobia at the word *politics*, while others speak of it definitely as an evil to be avoided. The term “politics” is generally applied to behavior within civil governments, but politics “has been observed in all human group interactions, including corporate, academic and religious institutions.”<sup>2</sup> An informed perspective on politics and actual political engagement are critical for the advancement of the community, especially now in the twenty-first century.

The church’s declaration of the gospel through evangelistic outreach and social programs can be regarded as a form of outward political engagement. Some branches of the Christian church have been trying to work with the government and with other church groups and organizations in the society, and certainly there are challenges based on how they see each other’s role in the public square.

The major aim of this study is to investigate the challenges of political engagement for the Pentecostal churches in the Cayman Islands, with special attention to the Church of God of Prophecy (COGOP). Being a leader of leaders for many years, this writer has come to recognize that the Pentecostal church, including Church of God of Prophecy, lags behind many others on the issue of social and civic involvement within

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<sup>1</sup> Joe Aldred, *Thinking Outside the Box on Race, Faith, and Life* (London: Hansib Publications, 2013), 142.

<sup>2</sup> Aldred, *Thinking Outside the Box: on Race, Faith and Life*, 142.

the context that they do ministry. During the researcher's Doctor of Ministry studies, which focused on global Pentecostalism, he was confronted with the need for the church to embrace also the ministry of political and social issues which challenge the community on an ongoing basis.

Pentecostalism is a spiritual experience and presumed as anti-political in many places. However, Pentecostals are "discovering the enormous political and social potential of their own past; and beginning to enter the scholarly dialogue and the political debate on many issues"<sup>3</sup> concerning the Christian faith in the public square. Pentecostals are also aiming to think outside the box about the challenges that they encounter in the Cayman Islands' democratic political context. By doing this study I hope to be able to identify, inform, and confront the challenges of political engagement facing the Pentecostal church in the Cayman Islands with special attention to the Church of God of Prophecy.

### Description of Research Participants

Several of the churches in the Cayman Islands are members of the Cayman Ministers' Association (CMA), which include Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals. In the summer of 2017, contacts were made with several of the participants to inform them of my intention and to ask them to take part in my Doctor of Ministry project. Being acquainted with them, I decided to select participants who would fit into distinct categories of church and community leaders, including Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal ministers.

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<sup>3</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 197.

Also, there would be the ministers of the Church of God of Prophecy and a Christian leader who was a former politician. Ascertaining their opinion on the challenges of political engagement should be insightful and thought-provoking as they are filled with a vast number of years' experience in ministry in the Cayman Islands.

The participants are grouped in four categories:

1. Political representative
2. Non-Pentecostal leaders
3. Pentecostal ministers
4. Church of God of Prophecy ministers

In mid-November 2017, twenty-one questionnaires were sent out. Seventeen were delivered by hand, one was given to a mutual friend for delivery, and three were sent by emails. The Informed Consent Document (see Appendix A), which outlined what is to be done, its purpose, a promise of confidentiality, and what is involved with agreeing to be a participant, was included in each package. Twenty of the twenty-one questionnaires were completed and returned.

The questionnaire consisted of twenty-six items; twenty-three are multiple-choice questions, of which nineteen are structured according to the Likert scale format. The Likert scale is also called “*“agreement scales”* because participants are asked whether they agree or disagree with statements presented.”<sup>4</sup> There was also one question requiring the participants to answer yes or no, another asking for the participant’s original nationality, and four multiple choices for the respondent to circle if they agree. Included

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<sup>4</sup> Marguerite G. Lodico, Dean T. Spalding, and Katherine H. Voegtle, *Methods on Educational Research: From Theory to Practice* (San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 108.

on the questionnaire was one open-ended question requiring participants to list additional information on the challenges of political engagement.

It is hoped that the data collected from the responses on the questionnaire, and that which is derived from the unstructured interviews, will give information that will be useful as Pentecostals, with special attention to the Church of God of Prophecy, engage and collaborate with others in the Cayman community and beyond. There must be collaboration with other churches and organizations, discussion with those in governance, and engagement in practical ways to ensure justice and shalom and what is for the good of all the people.

In order to look at the challenges of political engagement for the Pentecostal church in the Cayman Islands with special attention on the Church of God of Prophecy, the researcher thought it best to involve Pentecostal pastors from other denominations, who, at the beginning of their ministry, were exposed to the way of life in Cayman.

### **Research Design**

A mixed research strategy that includes collecting both quantitative and qualitative data will be done to discover The Challenges of Political Engagement by the Pentecostal Church in the Cayman Islands, with special attention to the Church of God of Prophecy. In terms of collecting qualitative (narrative) data, Karin Klenke states, “Qualitative research is the process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their naturalistic setting or context. It focuses

on the ‘why’ rather than the ‘what’ of social phenomena and relies on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning making agents in their everyday lives.”<sup>5</sup>

The research will be conducted by using the methods of survey/questionnaires (see Appendix B) and unstructured interviews (see Appendix C). The same questionnaire will be used for all the participants in their various capacities as pastor/leader/minister. The unstructured interview will be done with one of the non-Pentecostal ministers, one Pentecostal minister, and one minister of the Church of God of Prophecy.

**Table 1: Major Research Questions**

Major Research Questions	Questionnaire Questions
1. What is the relationship between religion and politics in the Cayman Islands?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13 and 14, 9, 7, 19, 20 and 21
2. What are the challenges of political engagement for the Pentecostal church in the Cayman Islands, with attention to the Church of God of Prophecy?	10, 11, 22a (22b and 18), 22c, 22d and 22e
3. How equipped are leaders of the Church of God of Prophecy to deal with the challenges of political engagement in the Cayman Islands?	15, 16, 8, 17, 12

### **Design Strategy**

There are three major research questions under which all the data collected will be placed and discussed. Table 1 contains the major research questions and the numbers of the question on the questionnaire alongside them.

The first major research question is, What is the relationship between religion and politics in the Cayman Islands?

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<sup>5</sup> Karin Klenke, *Qualitative Research in the Study of Leadership*, 2nd ed. (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing, 2016), 6.

Questions 19 to 21 on the questionnaire were asked of all participants. Question 19, relates to the participants' original nationality; question 20, the participants were to select the appropriate category that best describes them in the Cayman Islands; and question 21, was to identify the participants' age range. It was revealed that most of the participants were originally from Jamaica. It is also quite noticeable that all the participants are now Cayman Islands citizens except one Pentecostal pastor who has a work permit and one minister of Church of God of Prophecy who now has Canadian citizenship. The participants have been divided in four categories:

1. Political representative: one
2. Non-Pentecostal leaders: two
3. Pentecostal pastors/ministers: seven
4. Church of God of Prophecy ministers: ten

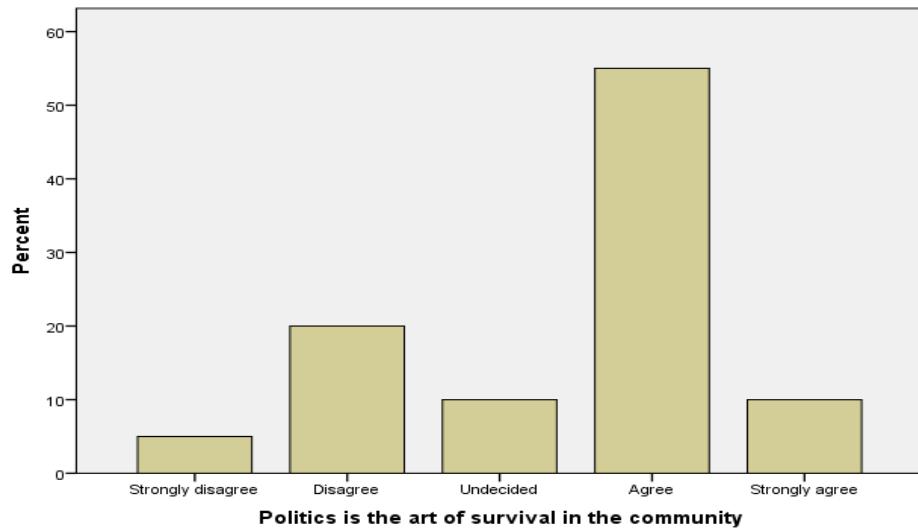
The range of the participants' ages is as follows:

1. Political representative: 66 and over
2. Non-Pentecostal leaders: one 46-55, and the other 66 and over
3. Pentecostal ministers: of the seven, two are 66 and over; four are between 56-65; and one 46-55
4. Church of God of Prophecy ministers: of the ten ministers, eight are between 56-64; one is 46-55; and one is 35-46

Several items on the questionnaire required the participants to decide on the broad meaning of politics and what is their understanding of political engagement. The responses of all the participants to question 1 (politics is the art of survival in the community) shows their views on the definition of politics. The political representative

disagreed with the statement. This was an unexpected response coming from a person who has worked in the public domain for many years. The two non-Pentecostal ministers were at opposite end of the pendulum with one agreeing with the question and the other strongly disagreeing.

Of the seven Pentecostal ministers, three agree with the statement, two strongly agree, one disagrees, and one remains undecided. Of the ten ministers of the Church of God of Prophecy, eight of the ten ministers agree, one disagrees, and the other was undecided. Figure 1 represents the responses of all the respondents. The responses from all the seventeen Pentecostals amount to 65% of the total responses. This could be broken down further to represent 25% of Pentecostal pastors and 40% of the Church of God of Prophecy ministers.

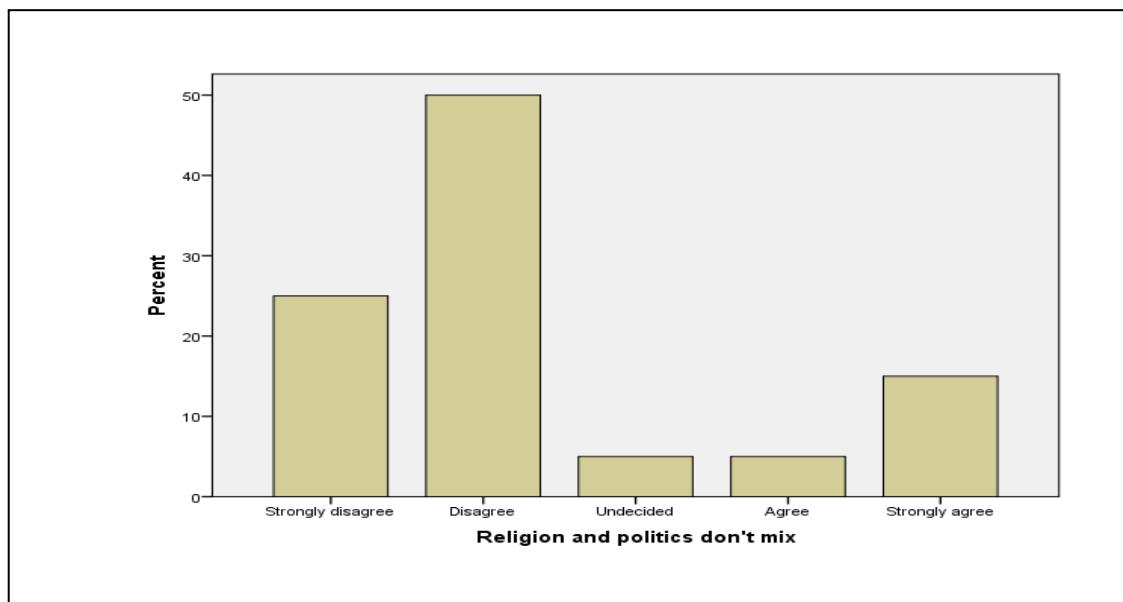


**Figure 1: Responses from All Participants**

Questions 3 states that “political engagement is more than partisan/party politics.” The politician strongly agrees, the non-Pentecostal pastors agree, all the Pentecostal pastors agree, and the Church of God of Prophecy ministers all agree. In response to

question 2 (Only politicians should be concerned with politics), 100% of the respondents disagreed with that statement. This response shows the need for political engagement.

Question 4 (Religion and politics do not mix) generated a little more variation from previous questions. The politician responded that he disagrees; the two non-Pentecostal pastors also disagree. All seven Pentecostal pastors disagree with the statement. Of the Church of God of Prophecy ministers, two strongly disagree and three disagree; three strongly agree, one agrees, and one was undecided. The responses show that the majority of the respondents believe that there should be no separation between politics and religion. The majority of respondents claim that there is need for political engagement. They acknowledge that there is the need for politics and religion not to be separated (see figure 2).



**Figure 2: Views about Religion and Politics**

For question 5, a combined 95% of the respondents strongly agree and agree with the definition of political engagement as collaboration between churches, government, and all the civic groups in the society. The “valid percent” column (see table 2) shows 50% for those who agree and 45% for those who strongly agree, which gives a total of 95% in agreement; one person (5%) was undecided.

**Table 2: Collaboration Between Churches and Other Groups Is Needed**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undecided	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Agree	10	50.0	50.0	55.0
	Strongly agree	9	45.0	45.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

In addition, the respondents believe that collaboration is needed in the Cayman Islands. For question 6, which states, “Church leaders in Cayman should have regular dialogue with political representatives about community issues.” All the respondents believe that churches and leaders should have regular meetings and be in dialogue with political representatives. The politician strongly agrees, the two non-Pentecostals agree, six of the seven Pentecostals strongly agree, and one agrees. Seven of the ten respondents

from the Church of God of Prophecy strongly agree while three agree. Therefore, 100% of the respondents agree that there should be dialogue in the Cayman context.

One hundred percent of the respondents to question 7, which asked, “Is it important to encourage church members to vote in national elections?”, believe that the church should encourage the members to vote. Nineteen of the twenty respondents strongly agree while one agrees.

Questions 13 and 14 can be taken together (Are politicians and civic leaders invited to special functions? Do they attend?). The politician did not respond to this question. (Initially the decision was made to give the same questionnaire to all participants in this project, but at points like this and for a few other questions, it became clear that the questions were suited for the clergy in its entirety and for the politician, partially.) The non-Pentecostals claim that politicians were invited very often. Varying responses were received from the Pentecostal ministers, two of whom said always, one very often, two said sometimes, and two said rarely. For both questions 13 and 14, nine out of ten Church of God of Prophecy ministers said sometimes. The politician did not respond to the question Do they attend? The non-Pentecostals claim very often and always. Of the seven Pentecostals ministers, there are variations of responses; popular responses are always and sometimes, but there are two who said rarely, and one stated never.

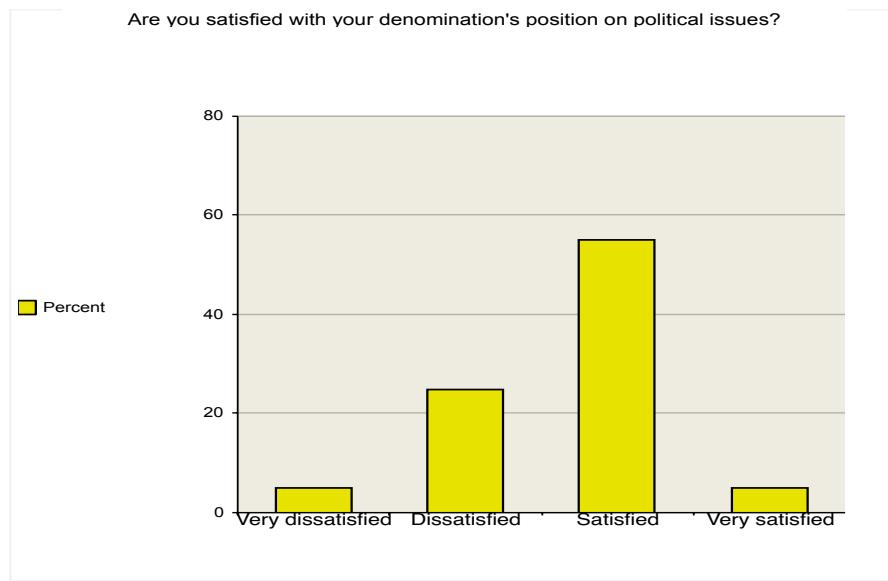
Question 9 asked for an agreement to the following: “Pentecostals, being people of the Spirit, should not be involved in politics.” Ninety-five percent of the respondents either strongly disagree or disagree. One participant from Church of God of Prophecy agrees that Pentecostals should not get involved in politics.

The second major research question is: What are the challenges of political engagement for the Pentecostal church in the Cayman Islands, with attention to the Church of God of Prophecy?

Question 10 asked, “Is there an established standard position of political engagement?”

- Political representative: answered no
- Non-Pentecostal leaders: one answered yes, one answered no
- Pentecostal ministers: of the seven, three said yes, and four said no
- Church of God of Prophecy ministers: three said yes and seven said no

Question 10, which require a yes or no answer, shows that 65% of the respondents indicated that their church has a standard position on political engagement, while 35% said they do not.



**Figure 3: Views about Denominational Positions on Political Issues**

Question 11 asked, “Are you satisfied with your denomination’s position on political issues?”

- Political representative: no response
- Non-Pentecostal leaders: both satisfied
- Pentecostal ministers: of the seven, three satisfied, three dissatisfied, and one non-response
- Church of God of Prophecy ministers: five satisfied, four dissatisfied, and one very dissatisfied

For question 11, 60% of the respondents are dissatisfied in varying degrees with the churches’ position on political issues. Dissatisfaction among the Pentecostal pastors’ responses show four out of seven not satisfied with their denomination’s position on political issues. The Church of God of Prophecy with ten ministers has 50% satisfied and 50% dissatisfied. See figure 3 for the variety of responses.

Question 22 has four multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question. The participants were instructed to circle the items they think is appropriate: What are some of the barriers/things that affect/minimizes political engagement? Question 22 will be divided into five parts: 22a, 22b, 22c, 22d, and 22e.

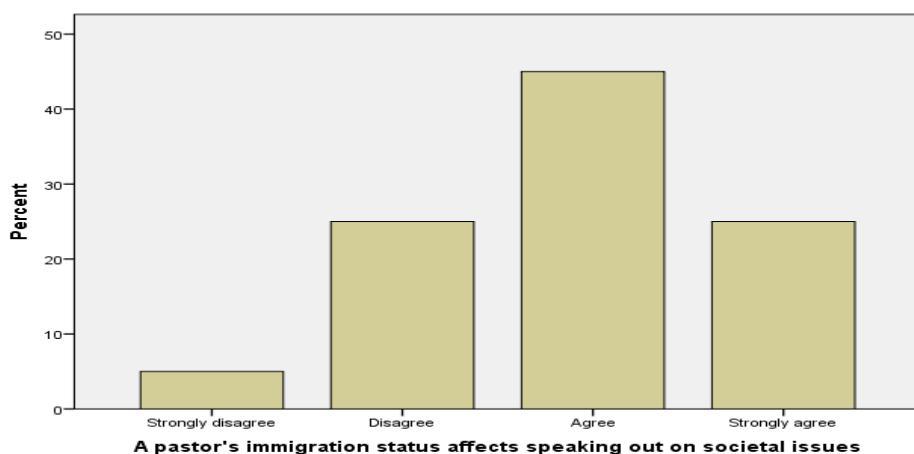
22a    Lack of unity among churches in the Cayman society

- Political representative: selected
- Non-Pentecostal leaders: selected by both
- Pentecostal ministers: selected by five; non-response, two
- Church of God of Prophecy ministers: selected by eight; non-response, two

22b Fear of the termination of work permit

- Political representative: selected
- Non-Pentecostal leaders: selected by one; non-selection, one
- Pentecostal ministers: selected by three; non-response, four
- Church of God of Prophecy ministers: selected by seven; non-response, three

Twelve respondents, representing 60% of the overall responses, believe that the fear factor is a hindrance to political engagement. Eight, representing 40% of the overall responses, made no selection to this item on the questionnaire. The three “born Caymanians” are of the opinion that this is a reality. Many of the non-responses came from those who now hold Caymanian citizenship: fear is not a factor now that their situation has changed. The sole Pentecostal respondent to question 18, who needs a work permit, believes that a person’s immigration status affects his or her speaking out on issues in the society (see figure 4).



**Figure 4: Effect of Immigration Status on Political Expression**

22c Schism between members within a congregation has negative impact on public witness

- Political representative: selected
- Non-Pentecostal leaders: selected by one; non-response, one
- Pentecostal ministers: selected by five; non-response, two
- Church of God of Prophecy ministers: selected by eight; non-responses, two

Fifteen of the twenty respondents or 75% circled schism as a hindrance to political engagement; 25% chose not to make that selection.

22d Established church is favored by the authorities than the Pentecostal churches

- Political representative: selected
- Non-Pentecostal leaders: selected by one; non-response, one
- Pentecostal ministers: selected by four; non-response, three
- Church of God of Prophecy ministers: selected by nine; non-response, one

The respondents overwhelmingly (75%) believe that the established churches are more favored by the authorities than the Pentecostal churches.

22e List any other information on the challenges to political engagement

Several of the respondents gave comments they feel contribute to challenges of political engagement. The list below represents those who participated, and their comments are in bullet form below.

- Political representative: participated
- Non-Pentecostal leaders: one of two participated
- Pentecostal ministers: three of seven participated

- Church of God of Prophecy ministers: seven of ten participated

Several things listed below were extracted from the survey questionnaire as challenges to political engagement in the Cayman Islands.

- Sometimes larger Pentecostal churches make the mistake of underestimating those among them might not be as large or because they don't know the individual.
- Most churches vary in their political judgments based on their knowledge of politics and exposure thereof. Nevertheless, the leaders of the upper echelon of the ecclesia are always correct with their ecclesiastical and political views.
- Based on the nature of the political system in the Cayman Islands, spiritual leaders are afraid to voice their concerns. Cultural differences in the country—one might be stigmatized or “tabooed” as being against government. Non-transparency of government policies.
- Lack of confidence by church leaders and members. Leaders might not be well informed on national issues to make a significant contribution to the argument.
- Many pastors are new to the mission field and therefore do not know how to operate in a new environment. Many Pentecostal churches are peculiar with their doctrine, and therefore they tend to be detached in sharing with others in the society.
- Some Pentecostal churches have an exclusive doctrine, where they believe that they are better than others, or they are the only true church, and therefore they do not mingle with other groups within the society.

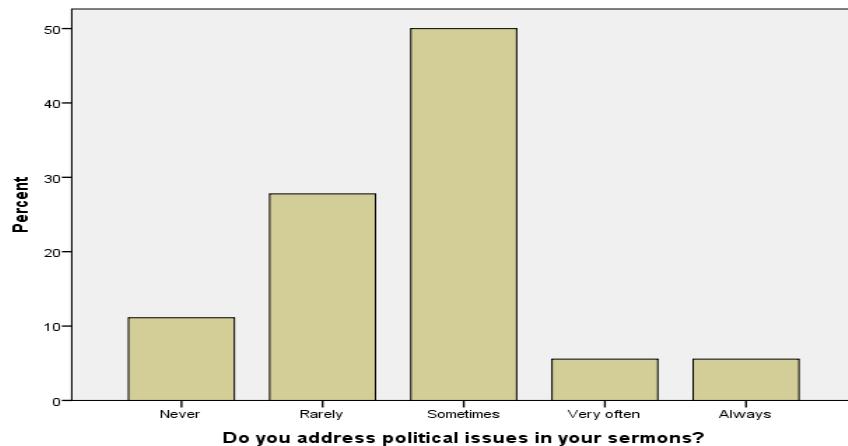
- Doctrinal belief is a hindrance, when a church thinks that they are above the other whether in terms of the day of worship or the name you are baptized in. Cayman is a financial destination and therefore those who come to work prioritize work and church is secondary.
- This is a transient society where those on work permits must leave the jurisdiction after working certain number of years; then they would leave for at least one year before returning to the islands. Ministers of churches are fearful that if they speak out on issues in the community, their permit could be denied. Some of our pastors need education in terms of collaboration; they should interact with people of the community. Some are so heavenly minded that they only preach to people about the afterlife; without interacting with them on earth.
- Sheep stealing, and sheep straying/leaving is a reality in the Cayman Islands, which is a deterrent to fellowship. Being a small society, “church hoppers” will always be in these fellowships who very often do not move from one place to another in peace.
- The established churches or the traditional Cayman churches contribute more to the Cayman society and therefore are more recognized. Sometimes pastors on work permits get sidetracked by seeking and doing personal favors with political leaders and therefore their ministry becomes tainted and non-effective. Lack of unity. People are often let down because we claim to be of the Spirit and often times are living contrary. The love of money becomes the major downfall to a lot of ministries.

- The church should endeavor to practice what the Bible teaches; this will allow the society the power of God at work and convince them that the God we serve is real.
- Complexion/color matters much in this country. Type of ministry—Pentecostal/nominal and religious groups. Transient society, before long people move on. Some are of the opinion that religion and politics should not be mixed.
- Lack of adequate and relevant information. Fear of retaliation for taking a particular side of a political issue. Not enough support to be able to make a notable difference on political issues.
- Lack of understanding among members of the value of political engagement by their own church.
- Many church members are too busy making ends meet to have any time left for other activities. Persons frustrated when they realize that no importance is placed on their wishes and desires.
- Cayman being a working society, there is hardly any time left after a hard day's work for most workers.

The next major research question is, how equipped are leaders of the Church of God of Prophecy to deal with the challenges of political engagement in the Cayman Islands?

Question 12 asks, “Do you address political issues in your sermons?” This was quite interesting, as 5% always address political issues, while only 5% do it very often.

The above two responses are from two of the seven Pentecostal pastors. Four Pentecostal pastors representing 20% address political issues sometimes and 5% does it rarely. The non-Pentecostals also address the subject sometimes. For the Church of God of Prophecy, three said sometimes, four said rarely: two never, and there was one non-response. Since politics is the art of survival in a community, it would be interesting to hear the content of these sermons and to see how relevant they are to Christian living. See figure 5 for the variety of responses.



**Figure 5: Addressing Politics in Sermons**

Question 8 states, “Church members should be instructed about the significance of political engagement.” All the respondents agree that church members should be instructed about the significance of political engagement. Education is key, and so, within the context of the church, pastors should be able to put the mechanism in place to ensure that their constituents are informed.

Question 15 states, “The pastor is the voice of God to his/her congregation and the nation overall.” The political representative and four of the Pentecostal pastors strongly agree. Two of the other Pentecostal pastors agree, while the seventh one is

undecided. One of the non-Pentecostal ministers agree, while the other disagrees. Nine of the Church of God of Prophecy ministers expressed agreement while one made no selection.

Question 16 asked, “Is Seminary education necessary for pastoral appointment?” This question received approval from six ministers from Church of God of Prophecy who strongly agree; three agree, and one is undecided. Of the seven Pentecostal pastors, three strongly agree, one agrees, two are undecided, and one disagrees. The politician strongly agrees, and the two non-Pentecostal ministers were also in agreement.

For question 17, which asked, “Do you think that having a seminary education helps the pastor in political engagement?”, 90% of the respondents agree and strongly agree; one of the Pentecostal pastors was undecided, while one minister from the Church of God of Prophecy disagrees.

### **Unstructured Interviews**

#### **Non-Pentecostal Minister**

According to the non-Pentecostal minister with whom I had a free-flowing conversation in the unstructured interview, he does not believe that the established churches are treated as favorites by the authorities. In fact, he thinks that the Pentecostal churches are treated better, based on his experiences. He thinks that the fear factor is a present reality. He also mentioned that “sheep stealing” (churches who lure members from one church to another) is a deterrent to rich, lasting relationship and fellowship. He outlined that in his early days as an expatriate minister, he was instrumental in suggesting and forming the Cayman Ministers’ Association (CMA) because of the lack of

engagement among churches and their suspicion of each other.

The CMA is now the voice of the church in Cayman, as the group was called on by the government to help frame legislation for the new constitution for the country. It is no wonder, therefore, that 100% of the respondents strongly agree and agree to question 6, that church leaders should have regular dialogue with political representatives.

This pastor said that the Pentecostal movement has a strong Jamaican influence and thus provides a base for stratification of the immigrant population. He is not worried about having church on every corner; if they are not against us, they are with us.

#### Pentecostal Minister

Challenges were not so great because this pastor was just charting the waters. Challenges are not religious but cultural, he said. He was extremely black, and most Caymanians are extremely brown, but they think they are white. He found a way to inject himself into the community and that was to find a politician. He said that one of the questions on the questionnaire said, “religion and politics don’t mix,” but he honestly believes that for one to integrate oneself into the community, a person needs to be a part of the political process.

He was asked, “You are living in the country with a government that has forgotten the poor and those on the fringes of society; how do you navigate that narrow political road in your sermons so that they do not accuse you of taking sides?” His answer: “You just follow the path of Jesus and he cannot go wrong, so preach the word as Jesus would have you.”

### Church of God of Prophecy Minister

Political engagement has been defined as collaboration among government, churches, and other entities within the community. He was asked if his church has been involved in such tradition. He responded, “We did not have collaboration because as a church we were pushing the exclusive doctrine. We were the only church! The ‘true church,’ and so our focus was getting people to heaven. We left politics to the politicians. They were the ones elected to serve the people of the nation.” I then asked, “It seems that you had a very narrow view of political engagement?” He said, “It was not a narrow view—they had no views at all! They have never voted, so there was no interest in the political process; our job was trying to ‘push the gospel pill’ down on everyone who would listen.”

What follows is a paraphrase of this minister’s views: The mindset of the church beginning to change toward the broader meaning of political engagement was attributed to education: “Without education, you don’t have the knowledge or the know-how.” The respondent explained that they used to say that it is the nominal churches that send people to seminary for training. Their thought was that just being in the Bible gives them complete mastery. They were encouraged not to be in any worldly things but to remain in the Word and prayer and encourage others to come out for Bible study.

Much rest on leadership; everything rises and falls on leadership! So now that their status has changed in the country, they see political engagement differently in that they can now contribute to the discussion in the society. With learning, an alertness has been developed that they are the salt and light of the earth. Citizenship has come, and this is the place you could be spending the rest of your life, so engagement in politics is seen

as critical to nation building, so we'll dialogue with others. The country has become more sensitive to political issues; there is more awareness in society and more alertness in the church. We are now at the forefront in asking for prayer for the *shalom* of the city.

With people from 135 nations of the world on work permits in Cayman society, the Church of God of Prophecy is optimistic that the society does not see a melting pot or clash of culture. The church sees several groups of people trying to hold their own by staying together based on ethnicity. The challenge is that many have brought their religion with them. The church is also concerned about their level of commitment to the nation because in time of disaster, many tried to get out of the country. These are economic migrants who are here to work and remain compartmentalized from other groups.

### **Findings from the Questionnaire**

An unexpected response came from the politician at the start when he disagreed that “politics [is] the art of survival in the community.” The responses from all participants to a crucial question shows we are not to take for granted that all have a clear understanding of the definition of politics.

To question 4, the majority of respondents think that there should be no separation between politics and religion. Some are of the opinion that religion and politics should not mix; figure 1 shows the variations in opinion, but it is obvious that most agree.

In response to question 5, a majority (95%) agree with the definition of political engagement “as collaboration with the various entities in the community of the Cayman

Islands.” All agree that political representatives and church leaders should be in regular discussions, for there is a great need for dialogue in the Cayman context.

Politicians and civic leaders are invited to special functions very often by non-Pentecostals. By contrast, the responses from Pentecostals range from always to rarely. The politicians vary in their attendance. Some church leaders are able to say always, some claim sometimes, but then there are those leaders who choose rarely or never.

In response to question 10, 65% of churches have a standard position on political engagement. We can probably see this as positively outlined in non-Pentecostal churches, but for Pentecostals, it is ad hoc instead of a standard position stating what is political engagement and how it is dealt with.

For question 9, the consensus is that all Christians should participate in the political process; there is no Pentecostal distinction. It should not be ignored, however, that one respondent from the Church of God of Prophecy agrees that Pentecostals are people of the Spirit and should not participate in politics. The selection of leaders or representatives in any country is the responsibility of every citizen, every Christian, Pentecostals included.

In question 11, six out of ten ministers from the Church of God of Prophecy are not satisfied with the denomination’s position on political issues. Also, 40% of the Church of God of Prophecy ministers’ responses for question 4 indicated that some seem to be vouching for the separation of church and state.

For question 22a, lack of unity among the churches is seen by many of the respondents as a hindrance to political engagement. Seventy-five percent of the overall

responses agree that lack of unity blocks collaboration. There were five non-responses to this item on the questionnaire.

### **Other Findings from Open-Ended Questions**

Respondents also mentioned other concerns, and those responses are listed below.

- Misunderstanding between large churches and small churches
- Nature of political system in Cayman
  - non-transparency of government policies
  - small society—you can be easily identified so there is fear of retaliation
- Reluctance to participate in discussions
  - maybe due to ignorance
  - lack of seminary training
- Doctrinal position forbids visiting other churches
- Exclusivity—will not associate or congregate with others
- Emphasis placed on doctrinal position; not possessing desire for collaboration with other churches or government
- Anxious to spread the right doctrine
- People tend not to prioritize church and its activities
- People came to work and earn
- Transient society; many after a while must move on based on laws
- Spiritual ones engage in occasional visits to church/uncommitted involvement
- Maintain focus on preparation for the life after
- Lack of unity

- Love of money
- Inconsistencies in practicing biblical truth
- Nationality and complexion matters
- Education is a critical component for the transmission of knowledge
- Schism—religious disagreement—many groups have constant breaks over doctrinal differences and misinterpretation of the Scriptures. Church hopping (moving from one church to another) is frequent.
- Sheep stealing—influencing others to leave their church

Most of the responses to the questions on the questionnaire speak to the possibility of a bright future in which political engagement will be embraced by various groups in their communities for the glory of God and the good of all.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### OUTCOMES

#### **Introduction**

This research was designed to do an examination of the challenges of political engagement of the Pentecostal church in the Cayman Islands with special attention to the Church of God of Prophecy. Based on the data collected, I conclude there are challenges, and in this chapter my goal is to report the outcome of my research findings. This research offers a reminder that there are many varying opinions concerning politics and political engagement and how these terms are perceived by the Christian church. Politics and political engagement are different entities that sometimes overlap with each other; hence the necessity to see how they work together for the glory of God and the good of humanity. The aim of this thesis-project is to help the ministry of the Christian church, with special attention to the Pentecostals and the Church of God of Prophecy in the Cayman Islands, to identify and confront the challenges of political engagement.

Pentecostals are Christians who are focused on the movement of God's Spirit as was evident in early church on the day of Pentecost. Pentecostalism is a movement; it is a trend within Christianity of a growing group that shares characteristic beliefs and goals.<sup>1</sup> Pentecostals are people of the Spirit, whose belief and experience are based on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

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<sup>1</sup> “Defining Pentecostalism: What Is a Pentecostal?”, *Talking Pentecostalism*, accessed May 27, 2017, <http://talkingpentecostalism.blogspot.com/2006/10/what-is-pentecostalism.html>.

## **Findings**

### **What Is the Relationship Between Religion and Politics in the Cayman Islands?**

The findings have confirmed that there are several internal and external challenges to political engagement of the Pentecostal church, including the Church of God of Prophecy, in the Cayman Islands. What is the relationship between religion and politics in the Cayman Islands? This researcher cannot recall a forum when there was mention of the need for political engagement, so there was uncertainty as to how the participants would have grasp this, but so far they have done well. This researcher thought that the definition of politics was not well known but was quite enlightened with the participants' responses to the definition that "politics is the art of survival in the community." Five of the seven Pentecostal ministers and eight of ten Church of God of Prophecy ministers agree with this definition of politics. Agreement with the definition shows that they understand what politics is about. It is more than the political process of the nation, which occurs every four years when national elections take place and representatives are selected to serve in the parliament of the Cayman Islands.

Based on the understanding of politics by these ministers, the expected results came when they all disagree that "only politicians should be concerned with politics." They exhibited some understanding that politics is not just a matter for government but for all in the society. Since politics is everybody's business, then it is only logical to think that people should show greater interest in the affairs of the community and nation. "Politics affects government, shapes society and influences culture. Because of what the

Bible teaches and the inevitability of its effect on our culture, Christians must care about politics.”<sup>2</sup>

The participants agree overwhelmingly (95%) with the definition of political engagement as “collaboration between churches, government, and other civic groups in the community.” This finding is broadly in harmony with this writer’s thoughts and other researchers such as Joe Aldred, who said, “This is the politics that seeks the welfare of people, builds up community and works for the good of all. Christians should be at the forefront of that kind of politics.”<sup>3</sup> Similarly, David Shosanya stated, “For those of us called to live in and seek the peace of the city, separation from the world (system) and engagement with organic communities (people that God loves) are complementary spiritual practices/disciplines.”<sup>4</sup>

In the politics of any society, whether partisan or political engagement or collaboration within the context of any community, Christians cannot be missing in action. The selection of any political leader is the responsibility of all citizens, because all elected officials represent all the citizenry of the nation. Political engagement, in the context of this thesis-project, requires the involvement of all citizens to build a community that is just and fair for all. “Political engagement is more than partisan party politics” saw 95% of the participants in agreement. All this is unexpected, because the researcher is of the opinion that this is the first time survey participants were confronted

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<sup>2</sup> David Closson, “Four Reasons Christians Should Care About Politics,” The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Conference, accessed May 16, 2017, <http://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/4-reasons-christians-should-care-about-politics>.

<sup>3</sup> Joe Aldred, *Thinking Outside the Box on Race, Faith, and Life* (London: Hansib Publications, 2013), 142.

<sup>4</sup> David Shosanya, “Seek the Peace of the City, Jeremiah 29:7,” presentation, Caribbean Leadership Conference, January 26, 2017, Cayman Islands.

with “politics” and “engagement” together. However, this study is limited in scope and cannot pursue the responses deeper than what is required now.

Responses to the statement that “Religion and politics don’t mix” show the majority of the participants by their responses seem to be saying that there should be no separation between politics and religion. Hyacinth Boothe, a Christian minister and theologian in the Caribbean, agrees that “it is necessary that political engagement be a part of the ministry of the church in the Caribbean.”<sup>5</sup> She gave a historical background as to why political engagement is needed by saying, “The region is reaping the harvest of its historical-cultural experience expressed in social and economic chaos, political confusion, technological deficiency, impoverishment of natural resources, the increasing polarization between the rich and the poor.”<sup>6</sup>

There are seventeen Pentecostals in the list of twenty participants who expressed their opinion on the mixing of religion and politics. All seven of the Pentecostal pastors believe that religion and politics should mix. Fifty percent of the ten ministers of the Church of God of Prophecy also endorsed the need for mixing. The other fifty percent of the ministers from Church of God of Prophecy, who, by their responses or non-response, seem to be vouching for separation of religion and politics. This division in one local church is suggesting that there will be challenges of political engagement. Due to the limitation of the study, the researcher is uncertain if their disagreement comes as a result of ignorance or deliberate action. It would require greater examination of participants who did not respond to this item on the survey instrument to know why. However, these findings are in line with what researchers Michael Gerson and Peter Wehner said:

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<sup>5</sup> Hyacinth Boothe, “Women—Ministerial Formation and Ministry: A Caribbean Perspective,” *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* 17, no. 1 (April 1996): 21.

<sup>6</sup> Boothe, “Women—Ministerial Formation and Ministry,” 21.

“Sorting out the proper relationship between religion and politics is particularly difficult for Christians.”<sup>7</sup> Those who think that there should be separation from the world need to answer the following question. If we separate, how can the church fulfill the commission of the Lord who has sent us into the world to make disciples of all nations?

Most Pentecostal participants have given verbal, theoretical assent to the need for political engagement between church and state. However, the issue is not a theoretical matter. It is practical in nature and involves communication and collaboration in the public square. The discussion regarding research question 6, which states, “Church leaders in Cayman should have regular dialogue with political representatives about community issues,” shows the need for engagement. Even though there is an overwhelming consensus by the participants for collaboration of church, government, and community groups in the Cayman Islands, it is at most wishful thinking. The aim is not to engage in a blame game but to ascertain what the church should do. The Christian operates with the injunction to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, which requires engagement. The onus is on the church, as stated by one participant in the unstructured interview, that “the church is to be the salt and light of this world” and should be ready to engage. Boothe is of the opinion that “the church should seek to initiate and participate in discussions and programs; let the united voice of the church be heard.”<sup>8</sup> Therefore, we need to examine carefully what things we can put in place to encourage further the cooperation and collaboration of all entities within the society, so that the society can indeed benefit from the collective minds of all for their ultimate destiny. According to Isabel Phiri, Kenneth Ross, and James Cox, “political and religious values come together

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Gerson and Peter Wehner, *City of Man: Religion and Politics in the New Era* (Chicago IL: Moody Publishers, 2010), 16.

<sup>8</sup> Boothe, “Women—Ministerial Formation and Ministry,” 21.

in a particular view of what human beings are or should be, meaning that the call to do good lies at the heart of Christianity and politics.”<sup>9</sup>

To question 7, “Is it important to encourage church members to vote in national elections?”, nineteen of the twenty respondents strongly agree while one agrees that the church should encourage its members to vote. Again, there is 100% agreement to participate in the political process of the country. Political engagement requires that citizens and residents be encouraged to participate in community affairs. When many of these participants first came to Cayman, they could not participate in the electoral process, and likewise the members of the Pentecostal churches were mostly economic migrants. The Pentecostal church in the Cayman Islands, including the Church of God of Prophecy, are considered migrant churches, as is pointed out by Harold Hunter and Neil Ormerod in their research: “In spite of the success of many migrant churches, they have failed to integrate the indigenous population in the membership of the church and still appeal to migrants.”<sup>10</sup>

Questions 13 and 14 asked, “Are politicians and civic leaders invited to special functions?” and “Do they attend?” Based on the findings, the non-attendance of the political representatives to many church events is because they are not invited. Thirteen of the seventeen Pentecostal pastors and leaders sometimes or rarely send invitations to political leaders. “Ye have not, because ye asked not” (Jas 4:2)! The non-Pentecostals claim that politicians are invited very often, and they attend. Pentecostals could learn from the established churches with clear policies on rules of political engagement as it

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<sup>9</sup> Isabel Phiri, Kenneth Ross, and James Cox, *The Role of Christianity in Development, Peace, and Reconstruction* (Nairobi, Kenya: Kolbe Press, 1996), 12.

<sup>10</sup> Harold D. Hunter and Neil Ormerod, *The Many Faces of Global Pentecostalism* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2013), 178.

relates to interacting with the political leaders. It is God's will to engage, but the invitations to busy leaders are few and far between. Lewin Williams in *Caribbean Theology* observed that "the believer who has discovered God's will for his or her life, cannot any longer be a detached observer of history, but must seek to discover what God is up to in the world and join God."<sup>11</sup>

Of the varying responses from the Pentecostal ministers, two said always, one said very often, two said sometimes, and two said rarely. Nine out of ten Church of God of Prophecy ministers said sometimes. Do they attend? Of the seven Pentecostals ministers, there are variations of responses; popular responses are always and sometimes, but two said rarely and one stated never. Nine of the ministers of Church of God of Prophecy said that the political leaders attend sometimes.

Question 9 states, "Pentecostals are people of the Spirit and so we do not get involved in politics. Ninety-five percent of the participants disagree that Pentecostals should avoid political involvement. One participant from Church of God of Prophecy agrees that Pentecostals should not get involved in politics. However, Ronald Sider implores Christian to get involved. He said, "Politics is too important to leave it to those who do not embrace a biblical perspective. We will never genuinely succeed in reshaping our societies for good, however, unless we think far more carefully about the political task."<sup>12</sup> It might be helpful in some communities for Pentecostal members and leaders to align themselves with the political directorate in order to fulfill their God-given mandate. Jesus did not shy away from the community, but his job description (Luke 4:18-19) says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to

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<sup>11</sup> Lewin Lascelles Williams, *Caribbean Theology* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), xi.

<sup>12</sup> Ronald J. Sider, *Just Politics: A Guide to Christian Engagement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2012), 29.

the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

### What Are the Challenges of Political Engagement for the Pentecostal Church in the Cayman Islands, with special attention to the Church of God of Prophecy?

A closer evaluation of the responses to question 10, which asked, “In your church, is there a standard position on political engagement?”, findings showed that Pentecostal churches do not have clear policies on how far they engage publicly with political issues. Eleven of the seventeen Pentecostal pastors and leaders disclosed that they do not have any standard policy on political engagement. For the Church of God of Prophecy, seven out of ten do not know of any policy on political engagement. While Pentecostals are exposed to spiritual and social ministry, many find themselves wandering in no-man’s land, because it seems their policies on politics and political engagement are not well defined. Therefore, they cannot articulate well their position concerning how far they can speak against unjust practices within the Cayman Islands’ communities. Williams asserts, “Many Pentecostal Churches are concerned only with the saving of the soul and ignoring political engagement as a part of the ‘full gospel,’ while the unjust conditions in which victims live are ignored.”<sup>13</sup>

The responses of the Pentecostal participants are represented on the survey instrument, but the position of these various denominations is not known. For the Church of God of Prophecy ministers who said the church has a standard position, it would be interesting to find out what they have that the others do not have. In the Cayman context,

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<sup>13</sup> Williams, *Caribbean Theology*, x.

Pentecostals cannot take a position aloof from clear policies on when and how to address politics. It is believed that the lack of policies in political engagement or participation on a large scale has led to this church not having had a strong prophetic voice in the country.

For question 11, which asked, “Are you satisfied with your denomination’s position on political issues?”, 60% of the twenty participants are satisfied at varying degrees with the churches’ position on political issues. Similarly, the responses among the Pentecostal pastors show four out of seven not satisfied with their denomination’s position on political issues. The Church of God of Prophecy continues to show differences on different items on the survey instrument. Fifty percent of the ministers are satisfied and 50% are dissatisfied. Again, the position of the Church of God of Prophecy is not covered by the survey instrument. One wonders if clear articulation of the church’s position on political engagement in the Cayman Islands should not be linked to ministerial appointment.

Jesus’ prayer in John 17 to the Father was that those whom he has called be one. Unity among Christ’s followers is a declaration to the world that there is love among his disciples. Scripture declares, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). “Lack of unity among churches in the Cayman society” is slated as a barrier to political engagement. Five of the seven Pentecostal church pastors indicated that it does affect political engagement. Likewise, eight ministers of Church of God of Prophecy responded in the affirmative. Jesus said in Mathew 12:25, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.”

## The Fear Factors

“Fear of the termination of a work permit is a barrier to political engagement.”

For this question, only twelve of the twenty participants selected this item. The three “born Caymanians” are of the opinion that this is a reality. Many of the non-responses came from those who now hold Caymanian citizenship. It is not certain if their responses to the question reflect their status as citizens now or when they were on work permits. Most of the participants who came to Cayman many years earlier are now citizens. It would seem that their responses relate to the change in status, for there is no need to apply for work permits now; therefore, these participants have no need to fear being deported or denied the privilege to stay in the Cayman Islands.

What are these pastors and leaders who participated doing to help those coming behind with political engagement? The one Pentecostal participant who has to reapply for a work permit every two years believes that a person’s immigration status affects his or her speaking out on issues in society. For now, “he will drink the milk and not count the cows,” meaning he will enjoy the privilege to work in Cayman and not criticize the system. Based on the nature of the political system in the Cayman Islands, spiritual leaders are afraid to speak against injustice that is being done to strangers or about the moral decadence existing in the country. The Cayman Ministers Association (CMA) offers some group dynamics, where they seek to help expatriate ministers to engage with elected officials and speak out collaboratively on issues without retaliation directed toward anyone in particular. Whenever there are societal issues that require a response, the Cayman Ministers’ Association would speak on behalf of all its members. Benestad

said, “Solidarity binds the members of communities together in a mutual commitment to the common good,”<sup>14</sup> to which I am in full agreement.

Examining the responses to schism being a deterrent to political engagement in the Cayman community, it is necessary to give consideration to what is meant by schism. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, schism is defined as “a division among the members of a group that occurs because they disagree on something.”<sup>15</sup> The question asked of the participants was, “Schism between members within a congregation has negative impact on public witness,” to which 15 participants (75%) answered in the affirmative. Four of the seventeen Pentecostal pastors and leaders did not respond to schism having a negative impact on the public witness of the church. Schisms have been within the Pentecostal movement prior to and even more so since the Azusa Street’s Holy Spirit outpouring of 1906, which saw the splintering of the group into denominational compartments. Similarly, the Cayman Islands have a fair share of schisms among the Pentecostal groups. These frequent breakaways of church groups are like pebbles dropping in water and creating numerous series of concentric circles which create continuous tensions in the fellowship halls and community gatherings. One of the participants in the unstructured interview alluded to suspicion and tension caused by “sheep stealing” churches, which is a deterrent to rich, lasting relationship, collaboration, and fellowship.

One wonders if there are good and bad schisms. Hector Ortiz has said, “Schisms have become a negative trademark of Global Pentecostalism. Schisms are often the

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<sup>14</sup> Brian J. Benestad et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, ed. Amy E. Black (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), Kindle ed. 15, loc. 241.

<sup>15</sup> Merriam-Webster, s.v. “schism,” accessed January 20, 2018,  
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/schism>, accessed January 20, 2018.

manifestation of the dark side of leadership. It should have become a ‘sign’ of how Pentecostalism has developed and spread.”<sup>16</sup> In the Cayman Islands, political engagement is being affected negatively because the majority of the participants have indicated that schisms have a negative impact on the public witness. Several of the participants are from groups that broke away years ago due to misunderstandings and doctrinal conflicts.

“The established churches are more favored by the authorities than the Pentecostal churches.” Fifteen of the twenty participants made their selection agreeing to the question, while five made no selection. There are four participants from the Pentecostals pastors who agree, while three did not respond. There were nine responses from COGOP and one non-response. In the Cayman Islands, it is quite noticeable that while the Pentecostal churches struggle to engage politically, the proponents of the official religion (the legacy of the colonial masters), which Garnett Roper also called “established churches,” seems to have the ear of the politically elected officials.<sup>17</sup> This point was strongly refuted by one of the non-Pentecostal pastors in the unstructured interview. He does not believe that the established churches are treated as favorites by the authorities, in fact, he thinks that the Pentecostal churches are treated better based on his experiences. The complaint that the established churches have the ear of the government and that they are shown more favors is summed up by one participant (a “born Caymanian”) who said, “The established churches or the traditional Cayman churches contribute more to the Cayman society and therefore are more recognized” by the government.

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<sup>16</sup> Hector Ortiz, Global Pentecostal, 1st Residency January 19-23, 2015 unpublished class note from PowerPoint presentation slide 343, first D.Min cohort, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, January 19, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Garnett Roper, *Caribbean Theology as Public Theology* (Kingston, Jamaica: Xpress Litho, 2012), 147-48.

From the vantage point of the Pentecostals, they are aware that invitations to state functions are sent to the established churches, especially the Presbyterian and the Anglican. This promotes favoritism and not collaboration and political engagement. In times of national emergency, the Pentecostals are urged by the political leaders to pray, for they are people of the Spirit and knows how to get through to God. Paul D. Hanson says, “Human governments are legitimate only to the extent that they serve the purposes of even-handed justice . . . It is solely from the promotion of these purposes that human institutions derive their authority to rule.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Open-Ended Questions**

The invitation to the participants to list “any other information on the challenges to political engagement” saw several of the participants expressing themselves freely by listing a significant number of items. Ten of the twenty participants or 50% gave responses. From the ten ministers of Church of God of Prophecy there were four non-responses, while four of the seven Pentecostal pastors made no selection or contribution to the open-ended question. The list of challenges to political engagement is long but not exhaustive. This list also shows that participants are aware of the Cayman community and are qualified to speak from their personal experiences.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside the weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:1-2a). The participants have seen misunderstanding between large

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<sup>18</sup> Paul D. Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010), Kindle ed., loc. 605.

churches and small churches; the nature of the political system in Cayman; non-transparency of government policies; a small society, in which one can be easily identified, so there is fear of retaliation; reluctance to participate in discussions; ignorance; lack of seminary training; doctrinal positions forbidding visiting other churches; exclusivity; will not associate or congregate with others; emphasis placed on doctrinal position; and not possessing a desire for collaboration with other churches or the government.

Continuing further, they have identified hindrances to political engagement, such as being anxious to spread the right doctrine; people tending not to prioritize church and its activities; Cayman is a financial destination and therefore those who come to work prioritize work, and church is secondary; people came to Cayman to work and earn; this is a transient society—many after a while must move on based on laws; occasional visits to church and uncommitted involvement; maintaining focus on preparation for the life after death; lack of unity; love of money; the love of money becomes the major downfall to a lot of ministries; inconsistencies in practicing biblical truth; nationality and complexion matters; education is a critical component for the transmission of knowledge; schism caused many groups to have constant breaks over doctrinal differences; misinterpretation of the Scriptures and misappropriation of funds; many people are hopping from one church to another frequently.

The participants also think that churches' beliefs and practices hinder them from working and cooperating with each other. Some churches believe that they are better than others, or that they are the only true church and therefore do not mingle with other groups within the society.

Cayman is a transient society where persons with work permits are allowed to work for nine years but then must leave for one year before returning to the islands. Ministers of churches are fearful that if they speak out on issues in the community, their permit could be denied. Some of our pastors need education in terms of collaboration; leaders do not always interact with people in the community. Some are so heavenly minded that they only preach to people about the afterlife, without interacting with them on earth. “Sheep stealing” and “sheep straying” are a reality in the Cayman Islands, which is a deterrent to fellowship. Being a small society, “church hoppers” will always be in these fellowships; often they do not move from one place to another in peace.

Sometimes pastors on work permits get sidetracked by seeking and doing personal favors with political leaders and therefore their ministry becomes tainted and ineffective; People are often let down because we claim to be of the Spirit and but are living contrary. The church should endeavor to practice what the Bible teaches; this will allow the society to see the power of God at work and convince them that the God we serve is real.

Other impediments listed are lack of adequate and relevant information; fear of retaliation for taking a particular side of a political issue; not enough support to be able to make a notable difference on political issues; lack of understanding among members of the value of political engagement by their own church; many church members are too busy making ends meet to have any time left for other activities; persons are frustrated when they realize that no importance is placed on their wishes and desires; Cayman being a working society, there are hardly any time left after a hard day’s work for most

workers; cultural differences in the country one might be stigmatized or “tabooed” as being against government and non-transparency of government policies.

Some of the observations mentioned by the participants in their responses to the open-ended questions have been explained in greater details when attempting to interpret and explain the items on the survey instrument.

Based on the foregoing, in the politics of any society, whether partisan or political engagement or collaboration it is clear that Christians cannot be missing in action. The selection of any political leader is the responsibility of all citizens, because all elected officials represent all the citizenry of the nation. Political engagement in the context of this thesis-project requires the involvement of all citizens to build a community that is just and fair for all. I agree with Hanson, who points out that “Christians throughout the centuries have asked questions about how to interact with governing authorities and the broader culture.”<sup>19</sup> It is clear that the lines of communication with elected officials and others in the community are at an all-time low. There is no excuse for tardiness and the nonexistence relationship and lack of collaboration in this small community.

#### What Are the Challenges of Political Engagement for the Church of God of Prophecy in the Cayman Islands?

Pastors and ministers have been called on to preach or feed the flock regularly, and from time to time address certain issues in the congregation and things that affect the community at large. The twenty participants, when asked if they “address political issues in their sermons,” gave responses accordingly. One respondent said always, one said very often, nine said sometimes, five said rarely, and two said never. There are many variables

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<sup>19</sup> Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate*, loc. 101.

to bear in mind. Pastors or ministers on work permit would not address politics in their sermons because of their immigration status. One participant in the unstructured interview said “fear of addressing certain issues is a present reality in the Cayman Islands.” Of the Church of God of Prophecy pastors, three said sometimes, four said rarely, two said never, and there was one non-response. Since politics is the art of survival in a community, it would be interesting to hear the content of these sermons and to see how relevant they are to Christian living.

The Church of God of Prophecy consisting of 85% Jamaicans would not venture in the “meddling,” as the locals would give a reminder that they, the natives, came by “pain” while the Jamaicans came by “plane.” The church’s mandate is from God; therefore, that boldness of the early apostles as recorded in the book of Acts needs to propel us to fulfill the Great Commission: “But Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to harken unto you more than unto God, judge ye” (Acts 4:19). Life in society would be less challenging if we recognize that “Christian witness in the public square contributes transcendent values about moral and ethical issues. Christian withdrawal opens a moral vacuum susceptible to influences that pressure government to move outside the purview designated by God.”<sup>20</sup>

Many of these church leaders are now citizens of Cayman. They are no more pioneers but have become settlers. Their status has changed in the country, and they see political engagement differently in that they can now contribute to discussion in the society but still are reluctant to do so. Amy Black says, “Christians are called to engage the world in all its dimensions, to spread the transforming power of the gospel into each

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<sup>20</sup> Closson, “Four Reasons Christians Should Care About Politics.”

area of life, and to let the light of Christ shine more and more brightly in society at large.”<sup>21</sup>

The year 2003 was historic in that approximately forty-five hundred people on work permits received their Cayman citizenship. Many from the Church of God of Prophecy also became citizens of Cayman. Since then, the question which states, “Church members should be instructed about the significance of political engagement” is now possible, but not via a sermon. All participants agree that church members should be instructed about the significance of political engagement. Education is key to the transmission of knowledge, and so, within the context of the church, pastors should be able to put the mechanism in place to ensure that their constituents are informed.

#### How Equipped Are Leaders of Church of God of Prophecy to Deal with the Challenges of Political Engagement in the Cayman Islands?

“And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom 10:14b). In response to the statement “the pastor is the voice of God to his/her congregation and the nation overall,” the political representative and six of the Pentecostal pastors were in agreement while the seventh one was undecided. One of the non-Pentecostal ministers agreed while the other disagreed. Nine of the Church of God of Prophecy ministers expressed agreement while one made no selection. With such overwhelming responses by the participants who agree with this statement, if pastors do not engage the community then the voice of God is silent within the Cayman community. The national overseer of the Church of God of

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<sup>21</sup> Benestad, et al., *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, Kindle loc. 227.

Prophecy, Trinidad and Tobago, Bishop Maurice Jones, said, “If you are not networking, you are not working.”<sup>22</sup>

Many Pentecostal churches, including the Church of God of Prophecy, are now showing interest to seminary education. At one point in the Church of God of Prophecy, seminary education was scoffed at; one had to depend on the anointing of the Holy Spirit. When asked “if seminary education was necessary for pastoral appointment,” the approval from nine ministers from the Church of God of prophecy was expected, seeing that several from the local church are attending seminary and are bringing back fresh insights about the Bible, as well as exposure to several new perspectives on the Christian way of life including political engagement and social justice. Of the seven Pentecostal pastors, four agreed, two were undecided, and one disagreed. The politician strongly agreed, and the two non-Pentecostal ministers were also in agreement.

Educating our people to understand political engagement is critical to community transformation. Jesus modeled community service for his disciples, taught them for three and a half years, and empowered them for service. The popular opinion of the Jewish council was that they were unlearned men. But how could one spend three and a half years in the presence of the Savior, the greatest teacher of all, and remain unlearned? They sat at the feet of the Teacher of teachers, and his impact on their lives was revolutionary to the point that they were ready to give up their lives to preach the gospel of Christ everywhere. They went with the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit. When asked, “Do you think that having a seminary education helps the pastor in political engagement?”, 90% or eighteen of twenty respondents agreed; one of the Pentecostal

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<sup>22</sup> Maurice Jones, funeral service, Chaguanas, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, January 25, 2018.

pastors was undecided, while one minister from the Church of God of Prophecy disagreed. Based on my own experience, I endorse this statement.

### **The Church of God of Prophecy**

The Church of God of Prophecy is a worldwide organization that began in 1903 and now has congregations in 135 countries of the world. For global leadership and supervision there is plurality: seven General Presbyters along with the General Overseer are tasked with the responsibility to give this global oversight in conjunction with all the states, national and regional overseers from these nations. According to Gerson and Wehner, “Politics is about the right ordering of our lives together.”<sup>23</sup> So it therefore follows that there is politics in the church. Churches have humans who are tasked with the responsibility to direct the forward move of the organizations, therefore, nothing should be done by might or power, but by complete reliance the Spirit of the Lord.

The Cayman Islands is a microcosm of the Caribbean, an area that is multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic, and very diverse. The Cayman Islands is the melting pot of the Caribbean, with people from 135 nations of the world on work permits. The present religious atmosphere of the Cayman Islands is a reflection of the historical origin of varied expressions of religious traditions and practices from Africa, along with Christianity from Europe.

A pastor and other secondary leaders guide the ministry of Church of God of Prophecy in each local church in the region. Most of these leaders are not seminary trained. The same can be said of the Cayman Islands. It is in this historical and present

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<sup>23</sup> Gerson and Wehner, *City of Man*, 136.

context that I am looking at the challenges of political engagement of the Church of God of Prophecy in the Cayman Islands.

Political engagement was not a familiar term when the church started in the Cayman Islands in 1978. There was “outreach service,” open-air street meetings to win the lost and prepare them for the other world—heaven. We were told that we had the whole message for the whole world, so we collaborated with no one, and no one engaged us because they were our competitors. We were so zealous with the good news and winning souls of the sinners that we hardly noticed the indigenous population was not being reached. The Jamaican community in Cayman responded well (the membership grew from 13 in 1987 to 425 in 2012), but only a few Caymanians were in the congregation.

When we decided to collaborate, it was with the other Pentecostal churches with significant Jamaican followings. The political leaders did not come to our meetings because we were not able to vote! The migrant church had leaders who were myopic, blinkered, and parochial, and lacked the ability to see churches in the community as partners in ministry and not competitors. The Church of God of Prophecy in the Cayman Islands is trying to correct our past mistakes by re-evaluating, by looking out for the good of everyone.

Through much exposure and theological education, the Church of God of Prophecy participants in the survey have done well in recognizing that politics is the art of survival in the community of Cayman and that political engagement is more than partisan party politics. Overwhelmingly they have embraced the meaning of political engagement as collaboration with government, churches, and civic groups working for

the good of the community. The areas of challenge relating to the mixing of politics and religion will be worked on through more dialogue internally and externally. The challenges to political engagement are being hammered away by their responses that politics is everyone's business and that interaction and collaboration with the political leaders should be given priority for the glory of God and the good of all. Jesse Rojo said, "It is a mistake for Christians to completely isolate themselves from the realm of politics. When the people of God do not take it upon themselves to vote or run for office, they carelessly leave the fate of future generations in the hands of wicked and immoral men."<sup>24</sup>

People of the Spirit must be visible in the public square, making sure that they understand their organizational stance on political engagement, embrace education, and present themselves as lifelong learners. "By abstaining from the public square, Christians are compromising on one of the most fundamental teachings of the Christian faith: You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:31)."<sup>25</sup> Thorough biblical knowledge will bring about a new mindset about political engagement and the power of Christ to bring about change in the life of the community of faith and the community at large. Seminary education is no longer taboo but is the avenue to identify, inform, and confront future challenges.

We are the voice of the voiceless and the conscience of the nation, and we cannot be silent. We must move beyond the walls of our churches or groups and become advocates for the poor, the widows, the orphans, the outcasts, and those on the fringes of

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<sup>24</sup> Jesse Rojo, "Should Christians Be Involved in Politics?", April 10, 2015, Philos Project, accessed January 18, 2017, <https://philosproject.org/should-christians-be-involved-in-politics/>.

<sup>25</sup> Rojo, "Should Christians Be Involved in Politics?"

society. Like our Master, we must continue to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Jesus was not afraid of confrontation. Speak up, O church of God!

The Church of God of Prophecy has a responsibility for all citizens and residents of the Cayman Islands. The church must now motivate its new citizens to do more in the areas of social justice, poverty intervention, and a whole host of community ills through dialogue with political leaders and other community groups to ensure the dignity of all. The reality is that hope for change cannot be found in any country's ruling class but ultimately in Jesus Christ.

### **Unstructured Interviews**

In response to the unstructured interview questions (see Appendix C), one participant said, "Much rest on leadership; everything rises and falls on leadership!" So many of the present pastors in Cayman are strangers and do not know each other. Pastors are so busy that even attending Cayman Ministers' Association is not given due consideration, so political engagement suffers. Leaders might not be well informed on national issues, so lack of information generates lack of confidence and so the pastor cannot make a significant contribution to the argument. Many pastors are new to the mission field and therefore do not know how to operate in a new environment. Many Pentecostal churches are peculiar with their doctrine, and therefore they tend to be detached in sharing with others in the society. Doctrinal belief is a hindrance when a church thinks that they are above others whether in terms of the day of worship or the name one is baptized in.

### Non-Pentecostal Minister

According to the non-Pentecostal minister with whom I had an unstructured interview, the established churches are not treated as favorites by the authorities. In fact, he thinks that the Pentecostal churches are treated better. He thinks that the fear factor is a present reality. He also mentioned that “sheep stealing” is a deterrent to rich, lasting relationship and fellowship. He outlined that in his early days as an expatriate minister, he was instrumental in suggesting and forming the Cayman Ministers’ Association (CMA) because of the lack of engagement among churches and their suspicion of each other.

The CMA is now the voice of the church in Cayman, as the group was called on by the government to help frame legislation for the new constitution for the country. It is no wonder, therefore, that 100% of the respondents strongly agree or agree that church leaders should have regular dialogue with political representatives.

This pastor said that the Pentecostal movement has a strong Jamaican influence and thus provided a base for stratification of the immigrant population. He is not worried about a church on every corner: if they are not against us they are with us.

### Pentecostal Minister

According to this pastor, challenges were not so great because he was just charting the waters. Challenges were not religious but cultural. He is extremely black, and most Caymanians are extremely brown, but they think they are white. He found a way to inject himself into the community and that was to find a politician. In response to

the statement, “religion and politics don’t mix,” he honestly believes that to integrate oneself into the community one needs to be a part of the political process.

A paraphrase of his view is that “you are living in the country with a government that has forgotten the poor and those on the fringes of society. How do you navigate that narrow political road in your sermons so that they do not accuse you of taking sides? Answer: You just follow the path of Jesus and he cannot go wrong, so preach the word as Jesus would have you.”

#### Church of God of Prophecy Minister

Political engagement has been defined as collaboration with government, churches, and other entities within the community. When asked, “Has your church being involved in such tradition?” he responded (paraphrased), “We did not have collaboration because as a church we were pushing the exclusive doctrine. We were the only church! The ‘true church’ and so our focus was getting people to heaven. We left politics to the politicians. They were the ones elected to serve the people of the nation.” I said, “It seems that you had a very narrow view of political engagement?” Then the respondent said it was not a narrow view; they had no views at all! They have never voted, so there was no interest in the political process; our job was trying to “push the gospel pill” down on everyone who would listen.

That the mindset of the church began to change toward the broader meaning of political engagement was attributed to education. Without education, “you don’t have the knowledge or the know-how.” The respondent explained that “they used to say that it is the ‘nominal churches’ that send people to seminary for training. Their thought was that

just being in the Bible gives them complete mastery. They were encouraged not to be in any worldly things but to just remain in the word and prayer and encourage others to come out for Bible study.”

He continued, “Much rests on leadership; everything rises and falls on leadership! So now that their status has changed in the country, they see political engagement differently in that they can now contribute to the discussion in the society. With learning, an alertness has been developed that they are the salt and light of the earth. Citizenship has come, and this is the place you could be spending the rest of your life, so engagement in the politics is seen as critical to nation building, so we’ll dialogue with others. The country has become more sensitive to political issues. There is more awareness in society and more alertness in the church. We are now at the forefront in asking for prayer for the *shalom* of the city.”

With people from 135 nations of the world on work permits in Cayman society, the Church of God of Prophecy is optimistic that the society does not see a melting pot or a clash of culture. The church sees several groups of people trying to hold their own by staying together based on ethnicity. The challenge is that many have brought their religion with them. Sider said, “We must develop a political philosophy that is firmly rooted in both the biblical world view and careful, persistent analysis of our complex, glorious, and broken political world.”<sup>26</sup>

## **Recommendations**

My recommendation is for a systematic program of public education to be undertaken to inform communities of the need for collaboration and the danger of

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<sup>26</sup> Sider, *Just Politics*, 29.

segmenting or aligning themselves based on ethnic groupings in the Cayman context. Every study of politics has shown that whatever the setting, the more years of formal schooling people have, the more likely it is that they will engage in political activities.<sup>27</sup>

Pentecostal church leaders within the context of the country will actively participate in nation building. I encourage more dialogue between the government and the church through seminars and retreats. Challenges will be confronted with the hope that church and state will see the benefit of shared leadership responsibilities.

Cooperation in the nation between the various stakeholders will accrue to the benefit of the society.

For the Church of God of Prophecy in the Cayman Islands, there are plans in place to start a theological school with the intention of enrolling those who are regular attendees to the church's Bible study into this school. Presently, more than thirty-five members and minister have expressed interest in this new venture. It is the church leaders' intention to invite other churches to join with us in this effort. This is a giant step forward as we seek to use education to overcome the many challenges of political engagement in the Church of God of Prophecy in the Cayman Islands.

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<sup>27</sup> Oliver H. Woshinsky, *Explaining Politics: Culture, Institutions, and Political Behavior* (Maddison Avenue, New York: Routledge, 2008), 89.

## APPENDIX A

### INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

**Project Title:** The Challenges of Political Engagement of the Pentecostal Church in the Cayman Islands specifically the Church of God of Prophecy.

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research study is to highlight some of the Challenges of Political Engagement Pentecostal Church in the Cayman Islands particular the Church of God of Prophecy face in the course of doing ministry. This will provide information to assist me in writing this thesis, which is needed, for me to complete my D.Min study. The information gleaned will be helpful in identifying the extent that the Pentecostal church can be engaged in the activities of the community, state or nation. The results from the questionnaire will be shared with the church to assist in formulating better strategies for future engagement. You are invited to participate in this research study because you are a **pastor/leader/minister** who is actively engaged in ministry within the church and community.

#### **RISKS**

There are no foreseeable risks to participate.

#### **BENEFITS**

There are no personal benefits for participating, but I anticipate that, in the future, society may benefit from this study and be better able to understand the role and challenges of women in Christian Ministry.

#### **COMPENSATION**

You will not be compensated for participating in this research project.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Records of participation in this research project will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. An identification number will be written on your returned response, and the contents will not be discussed with any specific mention of your name. Your

identity will not be disclosed.

## **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Taking part in this research study is voluntary.

## **QUESTIONS**

Questions are encouraged. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact: Clayton Martin (1-345-929-1193), claynormar@yahoo.com. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at: Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary.

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Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study.

Participant's Name (printed):

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(Signature of Participant)

(Date)

## **RESEARCHER STATEMENT**

I have discussed the above points with the participant. It is my opinion that the participants understand what is involved with their participation in this research study.

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(Signature of Researcher)

(Date)

## APPENDIX B

### QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to explore “The Challenges of Political Engagement of the Pentecostal Church in the Cayman Islands, Particularly the Church of God of Prophecy.”

As followers of Jesus, churches within any given community have responsibilities that go beyond the preached word, and walls of the church. The church will understand the impact and importance of greater collaboration within each community.

#### **Please mark the appropriate response**

1. Politics is the art of survival in the community.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly Agree   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

2. Only politicians should be concern with politics

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly Agree   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

3. Political Engagement is more than partisan party involvement.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly Agree   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

4. Religion and politics don't mix

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly Agree   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

5. Collaboration between churches, government and other civic groups can be defined as political engagement and that is needed in the Cayman Islands

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. Church leaders in Cayman should have regular dialogue with political representatives about Community issues.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. Is it important to encourage church members to vote in national elections?

\_\_\_\_\_

Very Important Important Fairly Important Slightly Important Not Important

8. Church members should be instructed about the significance of political engagement

\_\_\_\_\_

Very Important Important Fairly Important Slightly Important Not Important

9. Do you agree with the following statement: “Pentecostals are of the Spirit and so we are not to get involved in politics.”

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. In your church, is there a standard position on political engagement?

\_\_\_\_\_

Yes

\_\_\_\_\_

No

11. Are you satisfied with your denomination position on political issues?

\_\_\_\_\_

Very Satisfied   Satisfied   Not Dissatisfied   Very Dissatisfied

12. Do you address political issues in your sermons?

\_\_\_\_\_

Always   Very Often   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

13. Are political and civic leaders invited whenever you are having special events?

\_\_\_\_\_

Always   Very Often   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

14. Do they attend?

\_\_\_\_\_

Always   Very Often   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

15. The Pastor is the voice of God to his/her congregation and the nation overall.

\_\_\_\_\_

Strongly Agree   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

16. Is Seminary Education important for Pastoral Appointment?

\_\_\_\_\_

Very Important   Important   Fairly Important   Slightly Important   Not Important

17. Do you think that having a Seminary Education helps the pastor in political engagement?

\_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

18. A Pastors' Immigration Status affects his/her speaking out on issues of the society.

\_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

19. What is your original Nationality? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Tick appropriate category that best describe you in the Cayman Islands?

\_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_  
Citizen   Permanent Residence   PR with the right to work   Work Permit   Do not apply

21. Your age group

\_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_  
25 - 35   36-45   46-55   56-65   66 and over

**Circle the ones, which you think are appropriate**

What are some of the barriers/things that affect/minimizes political engagement?

22a). Lack of unity among churches in the Cayman society

22b). Fear of the termination of work permit

22c). Schism between members within a congregation has negative impact on public witness

22d). The Established Churches are more favored by the Authorities than the Pentecostal Churches

22e). List any other information on the Challenges of Political Engagement

## APPENDIX C

### QUESTIONS FOR UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

#### **COGOP Minister**

- Political engagement has been defined as collaboration with government, churches, and other entities within the community. Has your church been involved in such tradition?
- You had a very narrow view of political engagement?
- At what point did your mindset begin to change toward politics and its broader meaning?
- Now that your status has changed in the country, do you see political engagement differently? And would you now contribute to the issue/discussion in the society?
- With people from 135 nations of the world, is Cayman society a melting pot or a clash of culture?

#### **Pentecostal Minister**

- As a missionary Pentecostal to Cayman Islands, what were your challenges?
- What role did culture played in your pioneering work in Cayman?
- How was your integration into the Cayman community?
- How should new leaders collaborate with others in the community?
- How would you define political engagement?
- You are in a country where the government has forgotten the poor and those on the fringes of society. How do you navigate that narrow road in your sermon so that they do not accuse you of taking sides?
- How did you manage in a community with so much schisms?

### **Non-Pentecostal Minister**

- Would you agree that the established churches are treated as favorite by the authorities?
- What are some of the hindrances to political engagement?
- You have been instrumental in bringing several churches together under one umbrella: explain?
- As a seasoned church man in the Cayman Islands, give me your feelings on the Pentecostal movement in Cayman.
- How do you interpret a church on every corner in Cayman?

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Clayton Norris Martin was born in Hayes Clarendon, Jamaica on September 18, 1956. I attended Vere Technical High School 1970-1975. I attended Mico Teachers College (Now Mico University College) in 1977 – 1980, where I earned a Trained Teachers' certificate in Industrial Arts. Studied with Christian Bible College North Carolina 2006 and received a Bachelor of Arts in Religion. Graduated with Master of Arts in Religion from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary 2008 - 2013. Doctor of Ministry (Global Pentecostalism) degree, January 2015 - 2018 and expect I to graduate May 2018.

Became a Christian in 1972 and a member of the Church of God of Prophecy in Hayes Clarendon, Jamaica. Graduated from Church of God of Prophecy's Bible Training Institute in 1978 and became a member of staff. Pastored the Church of God of Prophecy in George Town, Grand Cayman, - May of 1987 – 1999. Served as National Overseer for Church of God of Prophecy Jamaica, Cayman Islands, Guyana and French Guiana August 1998 – November 2010. Appointed General Presbyter for the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands for the Church of God of Prophecy 2010 – to the present.